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COMMENTARY

THE MINDLESS YOUNG MILITANTS

The Hero-Victims of the American War Novels

ALFRED KAZIN

EVER since the war ended, a great many literary GI's, all of them haunted by the example of Hemingway and Dos Passos, have been trying to turn their war experience into novels that would be distinguishable from each other and yet not betray the fact that their authors learned nothing new about the war, since they could not see it for their countrymen.

This has been an unexpected and even humiliating discovery for some realistic novelists; it has played havoc with their first literary images of war and their natural hopes of finding in it an epic subject. To a

WHAT do the postwar novels—those bright-jacketed best-sellers that have been so enthusiastically received and yet do not quite constitute the “literary renaissance” the publishers have hoped for—reveal of the relation of the American younger generation to its war experience? ALFRED KAZIN here contributes a suggestive analysis of the deeper meaning of these books, with particular attention to the latest and perhaps most widely hailed of the group, Irwin Shaw's *The Young Lions*. Mr. Kazin's literary criticism has appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *New Republic*, *Partisan Review*, and other journals; he is the author of *On Native Grounds* (1942), a study of American literature. Mr. Kazin was born in Brooklyn in 1915 and studied at the College of the City of New York and Columbia University. At present, he teaches at the New School, and is working on an autobiographical book, *A Walker in the City*.

writer born, say, between 1913 and 1923, the “war novel” is virtually synonymous with his discovery of modern American literature, as he grew up with it between the wars. When he went off to war himself, perhaps packing a forbidden diary in his knapsack, he could not help seeing his life in a sequel to what the “lost generation” had made of the First World War. And after all, whatever the lesson of disillusionment that honest war writers always bring to their books, war has provided, even in its most tragic and distorting strain, a theater for the display of the writer's gift. One thinks of Whitman making the rounds of the Washington hospitals during the Civil War to write *Specimen Days*, a great bearded mother kneeling at the bedsides of his young men; of Stendhal's Fabrizio at Waterloo, looking for his horse and amazing the French; of Tolstoy's Andrew Bolkonsky, who, as he lies wounded at Austerlitz under the heel of Napoleon, embodies all the despair of young Europe before the revolutionary tyrant; of Stephen Crane's farm boy in *The Red Badge of Courage*, the anonymous figure of humanity recovered through the smoke of battle. In retrospect, there is something enduringly romantic and even Byronic about those lost heroes in the war novels of the 20's—Hemingway's Frederic, plunging across the river from Caporetto to join his lady in Switzer-

land; Dos Passos's John Andrews in *Three Soldiers*, who, as he is taken away by the MP's at the end (while the last sheets of his music flutter to the ground), seems to embody the everlasting struggle between man and the state. In the most grimly realistic novels written about the First World War, something is always wrested out of the carnage: the protest of the artist, or revolutionary, or pacifist, who has measured himself against the systematized inhumanity, and has taken for his own Whitman's beautiful line—*I am the man, I suffer'd, I was there*.

But the young realists of the Second World War find themselves in a peculiar moral situation. To a Hemingway, a Dos Passos, even to an F. Scott Fitzgerald, who sat out the war writing his first novel in an officer's training camp, the first war was the great divide between innocence and experience. The note they all sounded in their books about it from the beginning was betrayal, a feeling instantly understood by a whole generation, in every country, which came to think of the war as an irrational, unplanned series of massacres, meaningless to generals and soldiers alike. They had left one world and gone into another; from 1917 on, none of them could therefore think of their lives as whole, or of the war as anything but the cumulative disaster of their civilization. They had a point of view, rooted in the *surprise* of a particular experience; and there were still so few of them that each could feel that his record of war would at least be original.

MOST of the recent American novelists lack such a point of view, for they have not found in war sufficient contrast with the culture in which they grew up. Nor have they been morally free enough of that culture to relate war to their deepest habits of life. Naturally they all hate war as an institution, but they were too mixed in their feelings about this particular war even to question its necessity—a luxury that the lost generation writers enjoyed as a matter of course, and which, as one looks back on the greatest of all American war records, E. E.

Cummings' *The Enormous Room*, seems to fill that book with antique grandeur. (It is significant that the best book in English that has come out of the Second World War is still Arthur Koestler's *Scum of the Earth*, for Koestler also wrote from the point of view of a castaway and a prisoner, rejected by all the armies and governments alike.) Moreover, the new realistic novelists have lost even that philosophical and religious interest in the nature of man which is the real subject of "war" poets—*vide* Robert Lowell and Randall Jarrell. Like Norman Mailer, they write as wise guys, brought up in the great age of the wise guy; it is hard to tell them apart from the things they hate. The less they can conceive themselves as free individuals, the more they rely on super-toughness and "realism"; the less meaning the war has for them as an idea, the more they want to cover all of it as an event. Thus they are forced back on documentary techniques to help them through a mass experience which has already been so thoroughly documented that they must compete with our journalistic satiety. After all, how much more can be said about that landing on Omaha Beach, or Okinawa, and—from the vantage-point of the liberator—that first soul-rending day when an American Army detachment stormed into Buchenwald? What unsuspected and improbably distinct detail can still be found on the surface history of war that has not been exposed every hour on the hour by the radio, the newspapers, the newsreels, the regular correspondents, the combat correspondents, the official army and navy historians, the memoirs of the prime ministers, the war secretaries, the generals, the generals' secretaries and aides and chauffeurs, the Nazis at Nuremberg and the German generals confiding to Liddell Hart?

Yet in a way most of our war novelists are not trying to write about the war at all; they are writing about the American social problem, which was their real experience of the army, as the army was the only war many of them saw. They find in war that foreign landscape against which the familiar is endowed with fresh pathos. Many American

war novels today read like *Studs Lonigan* transferred to a coral reef four thousand miles away. But how can one laugh at this conservatism in our literary history when peace and war have come to seem indistinguishable chapters in the same American struggle? When a twenty-one year old Negro like William Gardner Smith wrote *Last of the Conquerors* to say that he found a welcome from Germans he never did in the army? When so eloquent if curiously immature a performance as John Horne Burns' *The Gallery* rests on an American intellectual's discovery of a humanity in war-torn Italy that he never found at home? When the height and depth of such a book as John Hersey's *A Bell for Adano* is a Yale man's astonishment that a mere Eytalian from Bridgeport or wherever was a better ambassador of democracy than General Patton? When it is impossible to read from one page to another of Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* without knowing exactly in advance what each of his characters is going to say, since none of them is anything but the American as General, the American as Boston Irishman, the American as New York Jew? *Life* disapproves of Mr. Mailer and the new realists, for the wrong reasons; for when *Life* pleads with them to return to the gentlemanly traditions of Howells and James it is not thinking of anything but an American literature that will show us fit for world leadership in this hour of struggle; it is ashamed of our "literary slumming." But one despairs of trying to explain to *Life's* editorial writers that after all the miles our veterans have covered and all the battles they have seen or been near, the most authentic note in their novels is still the lament of our minorities, the fierce competitive hatred against the *parvenus* who were their officers, the resentment against the bureaucratic structure of the army, and the exultant discovery that Europe, with all its degradation, is full of incomparably wise and tender human beings. It is as if all that once made up the "war novel" as we traditionally know it—the awareness by a sensitive observer, under stress, of his fate in the fate of other

men—had been replaced by that 20th-century monster and enigma, the American mass-army, at the center of which, more lurid than any Nazi the soldier has ever seen, impervious to the burning cities behind him, rises up our old acquaintance, Faulkner's Popeye, his arms full of cigarettes and liberated German cameras, saying with a familiar drool: "Hey bud? Ain't it true you Yids got us into the war?"

THIS is the image one carries away above everything else from Irwin Shaw's *The Young Lions*, though it is the most ambitious attempt yet made by an American novelist to document every last possible incident in the war outside the Pacific theater. It was for this image, I suspect, that Shaw wrote his book: to tell what the army did to a nice, sensitive, bookish young man named Private Noah Ackerman. Noah's ordeal at the hands of his violently anti-Semitic company in Florida has haunted the reviewers into awe-stricken prose and, very understandably, has shaken the author of *Mr. Roberts* into exclaiming that *The Young Lions* is the greatest novel yet written by an American. What they all mean to say, I think, is that they have gotten something really new out of a war novel; they have had a shocking emotional discovery of the cruelty in our society, from a Jewish writer who is, for all his easy Broadway skill, driven by his experience as a Jew. Shaw has put into the story of Private Noah Ackerman all that Jews have felt in these last years with such particular anguish, and to see Noah there, a shy and liberal intellectual slowly petrifying into another Jew on the cross, is to awaken with horror to a victim who is more real than the millions of victims we have read about, for he is familiar and yet absolutely alone. Perhaps, though the reviewers are unwilling or unable to say so, they have found themselves confronted, in Shaw's open indignation as a Jew, with the main source of his power to move them. For that single concentrated scene of Noah's suffering is the moral center of his book, as Noah is its hero and its real reason for being. But if we all respond to Noah with the

sympathy and alarm that he calls for, it is also because nothing else in Shaw's world has any particular meaning.

IT is a strange experience to read through this long and expertly contrived book, which in a succession of thumb-nail sketches dramatizes every historic place, detail, and possible variety of characters involved in the European war, and to realize that the truest, the deepest, and the most confused thing in it is Shaw's feeling for Noah Ackerman. Yet Shaw has not sought to write anything so "obvious" and sentimental as a novel about a Jewish soldier who found himself serving with a lynch mob—far from it. His book recapitulates almost the whole of the war, and Noah is only one of three leading protagonists: the other two are Michael Whitacre, a Broadway-Hollywood stage-director, who represents the worldly side of American 20th-century life, and the Austrian Nazi sergeant, Christian Diestl, originally a "good" Nazi, and at one time even a member of the Austrian CP. The book begins in Innsbruck before the war; it ends in a Bavarian forest just outside a liberated concentration camp in 1945. In between, we are taken to New York, Hollywood, Florida, Vermont, Fort Dix, Paris in 1940, Libya in 1942, Berlin, Capri, London, Dover, Normandy, Germany, and some other places I forgot to list in my notes; we meet the greatest possible number and variety of characters, from British movie actors in Hollywood to an Albanian anti-Semite in a concentration camp; from high Nazi and Lesbian circles in Berlin to an old Frenchman in Caen, summer of 1944, who had the Woolworth Building tattooed on his left arm.

Shaw can never forego a single date or place related to the war. When Noah and his future wife go to bed with each other for the first time, their love-making must be capped by the news that the Germans have invaded Russia. When Michael and his wife go off to the country for a luxuriously argumentative weekend that will finally kill their marriage, it must be on the day the Germans entered Paris. The book is an

anthology of what all the correspondents have seen, of all the war jokes, of all the national types; the method consists in so many theater-wise "terrific" scenes that the book looks like the *March of Time* war films done over by the Group Theater—every detail sharply brought out in the spotlight of Our Time, each one designed to impress on you the idiosyncrasy of a different type, and all the types following each other on the stage for their brief, their ecstatically dramatic moment. Thus in one scene, when Michael finds himself in Caen, we meet first the lovable old tattooed Frenchman above (who is all lovable old Frenchmen who remember the AEF and love America); then a young Scotch-Canadian officer with the British officer's moustache, leading his company into battle to the sound of bagpipes, smiling with heartbreaking gaiety and twirling a swagger stick; then an American soldier who complains about his frigid wife and writes her all the muck of war because he hates her; then an Italian iceman from Boston who dreams out loud about being back on his route again.

YET at the center of it all is Noah Ackerman and that single concentrated scene of his ordeal. For Noah, who wanted only to be a good soldier, to read his Joyce and Eliot and to write long loving letters to his Gentile wife Hope in Brooklyn, finds that his Southern fellow-soldiers hate him with such delirious joy that for them the war is essentially a chance to get at him. Captain Colclough at inspection time discovers *Ulysses* in his locker, insults him publicly, and deliberately condemns the company to barracks on a Saturday night so they will blame Noah; Sergeant Rickett takes the cue on from there, and with much lisping and profanity condemns in Noah all Jews, liberals, readers of *Ulysses*. Noah is hazed, beaten, robbed; until he decides to protect his rights by taking on every last sadist in his company and by brandishing a knife.

If, with all one's knowledge of anti-Semitism in America and in the army, there is still something faintly improbable about

the unrelieved concentration of Noah's ordeal, it is because Shaw's method calls for "drama" at every point, and is powerless to indicate any subtle shading within a character, any growth in a relationship, no matter how hostile. There is just so much room in the book even for Noah, and he must get the facts of life all at one blow. But there is a deeper reason for the violence of Noah's experience. For up to the point where Noah decides that he can lick the whole United States Army, if necessary, he has been the Jew as *sensitif*, as intellectual—not a type Shaw thinks we can afford; now he becomes the Jewish hero of Arthur Szyk's cartoons and a kind of fantasy-revenge for all the Jews who have been flayed, herded, burned in our time. He turns the tables on his enemies; he wins their grudging respect; he shows himself the best damned soldier in the army. When his company lands in France, the ineffable Captain Colclough goes mad with fright, but Noah not only proves profoundly resourceful and courageous; he even guides one of his old persecutors across a canal, under fire; and though the man dies (as Captain Colclough turned out to be a neurotic coward as well as an anti-Semite) we cannot help feeling that there is a poetic justice in the arrangement: Noah is the demiurge, while the wicked have been shown up at last.

NOAH finds the strength to live through a certain mindless militancy; and it is difficult not to feel that this is Shaw's real affirmation against the age in which we live. There is a sullenly heroic quality about Noah which is not easy to describe, but it seems to belong with a certain determined strain in our present Jewish culture, with the polemical style of Ben Hecht and the Irgun, with the faces of young Sternists as one has so often, and perhaps unconsciously, meditated on their transformation of the "Jewish type." It breathes a tonic defiance of scruples, mind, its own curious fatalism. I say fatalism because Noah must, of course, die at the end, at the hands of Sergeant Christian Diestl in the Bavarian forest just as

one finds in the literature of Palestine terrorists that glorification of death, that passion for sacrifice, which is the traditional note in all terrorist literature, and which in the minds of certain Jewish militants today shows that they still think of themselves as the despised and rejected who can make order of the world only by the cult of the act. The Jew as the scapegoat and outsider is a perennial theme in our history; but the Jew as militant sacrifice, as the hero of death, impatient of complexity, is a new feature. And, as so many Jews have wonderingly and gratefully noticed, has won the support of *Pravda*, the enthusiasm of the Irish Republican Army, the respect of hostile Gentiles, and has now even moved Howard Fast to desert George Washington for Judas Macabaeus. After all!

I have often seen Shaw called a slick writer, and there is no doubt that he is very quick on his feet indeed. But reading his book I felt that his real quality is something else—an emotional belligerence, an arousement of certain sensual gifts without any firm moral depth, even a fear of people who ask "intellectual" questions at the wrong time. Here, for example, is a passage in which Michael Whitacre reflects after meeting a Hollywood fellow-traveller named Johnson—and it is worth quoting, among other reasons, because it shows how little Shaw trusts even in certain orthodox formulas of the Left he may have once supported:

"He thought of Johnson and his other friends with displeasure. Either they were insensitively militant like Johnson, in their untouchable civilian occupations, or, under a thin veneer of patriotism, they were cynical and resigned. And this was no time for resignation, Michael felt. This was no time for saying no or perhaps. This was a time for a great yea-saying. That was a good thing about getting into the Army. He would get away from the over-sensitive resigners, the poetic despairers, the polite suicides. He had come of age at a time of critics, in a country of critics. Everyone criticized books and poetry and plays and government and the policies of England, France, and

Russia. . . . Age of Critics, country of critics. He had begun to feel it was a sour age and a barren country because of it. This was a time for roaring rhetoric, savage vengeance, melodramatic shouting of boasts and assurance down the corridors of night. This was a time for roistering and wild-eyed soldiers, crazy with faith, oblivious of death. Michael could see no faith-madness around him. . . . Stay out of the Army and you had to turn critic. He wanted to be a critic only of the enemy."

And of course we all know who the enemy is: he is a Nazi. Yet the whole point of Christian Diestl's history in this book is that he is really a human being like any other, slowly turned into an incorrigible beast by the strain of war and the force of his culture, which no man alone, except an eccentric or moral genius, can withstand. And Christian is no more a moral genius than Noah Ackerman or Michael Whitacre: he is just a 20th-century man in a particularly bad spot. There is even a charming touch on the universal fate of liberals like Christian and Michael, for neither of them can obtain a commission in his army: Christian, because he once belonged to the Austrian CP; Michael, because he once signed a petition for Loyalist Spain. And, in fact, Christian is less consciously Noah's enemy than the anti-Semitic hill-billies in Florida; when he kills Noah at the end, he is shooting at a foreign soldier who has invaded his country and would just as quickly kill him. Christian is a Nazi, and the Nazis are our enemies; but Noah's relationship to Christian is the mechanical encounter of two destructive machines confronting each other. If it is Noah Ackerman who dies before Christian Diestl (he is immediately shot down by Michael Whitacre), it is because Noah's death has a tragic fitness in Shaw's mind: the deaths even compose a moral sequence. Noah dies first, just after he has seen his fellow-Jews in the concentration camp, because he is the paradigm of innocence and suffering. Like Lincoln, like Christ, he is the sacrifice of the purest and the best demanded by our deepest mythology. Then Michael Whit-

acre, the liberal Gentile, Noah's friend, kills the Nazi in turn: this is a political and moral necessity, and it incidentally displays Michael's growth: he is no longer the cynical Broadway-Hollywood playboy bemoaning the lack of heroism in the world; he has avenged the Jew and redeemed the sacrifice. Then he lifts the body of Noah Ackerman to his shoulders and carries him to Captain Green, the good officer who has replaced the *hors de combat* Captain Colclough and has just won our hearts by permitting a rabbi, liberated from a concentration camp, to hold the camp's first religious service, against the protest of an anti-Semitic fellow-prisoner. The last line in the book is: "And he refused to allow any of the other men in the Company to help him carry the body, because he knew he had to deliver Noah Ackerman, personally, to Captain Green." Why to Captain Green, and why "personally"? Because the corpse of Noah Ackerman is the bond between Jew and Gentile, between Gentile and Gentile; Noah has made good by dying.

STILL, we should like to know: what about Captain Colclough and Sergeant Rickett and all those fiercely barbaric fellow-soldiers of Noah's in the Florida training camp? Are they, too, supposed to forgive Noah as a Jew because he has died for them? If we are to be critics "only of the enemy," should we not at least know something more about *them*? Are they nothing but infinitely exchangeable masks for the anti-Semite in our society? It is striking that Shaw can imagine a personality and a history for Christian Diestl, but none for those who are a more immediate threat to Noah Ackerman. The reason, of course, is that Christian is part of Our Time; he is a Nazi; we all know how effortlessly the movies can reproduce Nazis. If you want to make a "quickie," you simply make him a brute; if you are more ambitious and subtle, you imagine him an Austrian, a ski instructor, not unacquainted with English, and even a former member of the Austrian CP. The hill-billies who tormented Noah are more difficult; in a sense they are so much a part of us all, but we hardly know

them; and, alas, they are not simply a political enemy, conveniently to be understood, like Christian Diestl. Are they anti-Semites because they are hill-billies, and are all hill-billies anti-Semites? It is hard to say: they are political cartoons of the stranger whom our liberal culture hardly knows at all. And if as I think is the case with Shaw, we depend on certain political clichés but in our hearts no longer make sense of the world, we cannot confront the hidden enemy without divesting him of all personality and discharging upon him all the wrath of our experience. I would even suggest that the more we are dominated by large issues without finding any meaning in them, the more we are forced to pile up and pile up the ordeal of Noah Ackerman: if all else fails us, we always remember how innocent we were, and defenseless.

I remember that when I saw Shaw's first success, *Bury the Dead*, I felt uneasily behind its commonplace anti-war lesson (as of 1936) a certain bitterness or confusion, which he was still able to deploy around himself as his chief literary resource. I recognized in

him then one of those writers, brought up in the radical immigrant Jewish culture of New York, who would become popular not because of any personal insincerity or cheapness—it is always a delusion of intellectuals that popular writers do not mean what they write—but because they depended on certain attitudes which they themselves did not fully understand. Some of the most dramatic successes in American films, theater, journalism, and politics derive from that situation; and the greater their personal struggle, often the greater their ability to supply the dramatic seasoning of Jewish family bitterness, the Jewish joke, the classic *J'Accuse!* of Jewish experience through the ages. That Shaw's struggle for meaning has been intense is clear from the book: chaos everywhere, in all countries, until one can no longer tell war from peace, the enemy from the friend, except through the death of Private Noah Ackerman. Poor Noah, who must bear the brunt not only of being all the Jews confronting all the anti-Semites, but of Irwin Shaw's life in an irrational world, full of critics.

THE ROAD BACK FOR THE DP'S

Healing the Psychological Scars of Nazism

PAUL FRIEDMAN

IT SEEMS altogether incredible today that when the first plans for the rehabilitation of Europe's surviving Jews were outlined, the psychiatric aspect of the problem was overlooked entirely. Everyone engaged in directing the relief work thought solely in terms of material assistance to the DP's. It took months of first-hand practical experience before anyone would acknowledge a similar, equally pressing need for psychological assistance.

Perhaps this astonishing oversight can be better understood if one remembers the atmosphere of those anxious days before the liberation of Europe. None of us knew then what we might expect to find in the ruins of Europe, and it was all too easy, especially

IN THE efforts to reintegrate Europe's DP's into the world's society, it must not be forgotten that the return to normal involves much more for them than a place to live and work: the scars of the concentration-camp experience run deep, and their final rehabilitation requires a full understanding of the effects of the Nazi terror upon the minds and spirits of its victims. PAUL FRIEDMAN, practicing psychoanalyst and associate in neuropsychiatry at the Beth Israel Hospital, has had a unique opportunity to study the Jewish DP's in Europe, Cyprus, and Palestine. In 1946, under the auspices of the American Joint Distribution Committee, he made a survey of mental health among the Jewish DP's in Europe, with special emphasis on the problems of children; in 1947, he headed a psychiatric team which surveyed the situation in the camps in Cyprus and helped establish a program of mental hygiene to be put into practice in Palestine. His present article embodies some of the more significant findings of these studies. Dr. Friedman was born in Lublin, Poland, in 1899, studied philosophy and medicine at the universities of Vienna, Jena, Berlin, Geneva, and Berne, and worked in the psychiatric clinics at the universities of Zurich, Lausanne, and Paris. He came to this country in 1938.

for the psychiatrist, to think of Europe as a huge, unattended hospital for neurotics, psychotics, and the hopelessly insane. How then explain the indifference and even often downright opposition on the part of many people to psychiatric aid for the survivors? It was not due—let me hasten to explain—to any lack of devotion or interest. It was rather that all of us—I do not by any means exclude myself—were filled with a sharp and pervasive feeling of guilt towards those very victims we were trying to help. As a defense against this omnipresent emotion, leaders in relief work tended to credit the optimistic stories about the survivors, while at the same time they discounted those describing psychological misery and disorder. We accepted the theory that the very fact of survival was evidence of physical and psychological superiority—without looking too closely at the implications of this statement, which dishonored millions of martyred dead.

Indeed, a number of observers who went to Europe in the early days of relief organization found the DP's, especially those who had come out of the concentration camps, in a state of elation and enthusiasm bordering on euphoria. Uninformed in matters of psychology, these observers reported that the state of mind of the people in the DP camps was almost miraculously unaffected by their recent terrible experiences. But one could have anticipated that it would not take long for the first euphoric reaction—a reaction quite understandable after the terrors that had gone before—to vanish and be replaced by a deep depression. This happened.

There would be little point in recounting these past errors, especially since the record of the relief organizations has been, on the whole, so magnificent, were it not that

the guilt feeling that occasioned the initial mistake still seems to exert an influence on our thinking. And though it is inevitable that this should be so—for we were safe in America while our brothers in Europe were undergoing the cruelest of martyrdoms—I must still insist that the only really helpful attitude toward the DP is to combine with the warmest sympathy the most clear-sighted objectivity. I do not think that one excludes the other. On the other hand, if we permit our unconscious feelings—be they guilt or whatever—to dominate our approach to the problem, then the greatest sufferers from our indulgence will be the DP's themselves.

Those of us who have had a chance to work in the field with the concentration-camp victims have learned that their demands are often not justified by physical necessity so much as by a fear of losing out, of being rejected, a fear that others might get more than they. Certainly these sufferers should be spared more frustration and disappointment whenever possible. But it is also essential, if only for their own sake, that they learn to come to practical terms with the world outside the barbed wire. Too many of the field workers who first came into contact with DP's did not understand this. They either acceded to the demands or made promises that they were unable to carry out.

It is not possible, of course, in so brief an article as this, fully to describe the conditions of the DP's, as I saw them, or to outline a complete program for handling their psychological problems. But I do believe we can indicate through example what these problems are in broad outline and sketch out a more appropriate approach to deal with them.

It should be pointed out here that indiscriminate use of the term "displaced persons" has often been misleading. Not all DP's are ex-inmates of the Nazi concentration camps, since only about one hundred thousand Jews survived these camps, of whom about four thousand are children under eighteen. The majority of the Jewish

displaced persons consist of children who were kept in hiding, of Polish Jews who returned from Russia after the war, and great numbers of Jews from Rumania and Hungary. Obviously, those who went through the experience of the Nazi concentration camps present the most severe psychological problems—but even in their case it would be an error to assume that a majority, or even any substantial fraction, are in need of specific psychiatric treatment: this is something that can be determined only for each individual separately. However, the years of tension and anxiety have affected all the DP's to a greater or lesser degree, and a sound program of mental hygiene—a term which includes everything from intensive psychiatric treatment of selected individuals down to the relatively simple matter of seeing to it that immigrants to Israel are quickly integrated into its economic and social life—is necessary for the group generally, whether in Germany, in Cyprus, or in Palestine.

WHEN I was appointed by the Joint Distribution Committee to undertake the task of making a psychological survey of the surviving adults and children, with a view to a program of therapy and guidance, I was filled with dread at what I might discover in Europe. But when I met the DP's in their camps and the children in the camp centers and foster homes, I was delighted to find that my forebodings had been decidedly exaggerated. When I talked to the survivors—the adults and children who had been in the concentration camps or had hidden in the forests—I was amazed to see how quickly they had recovered. They all gave evidence of an incredible physical and psychological resilience. In the foster homes set up by the child-care organizations* and subventioned by the American Joint Distribution Committee, in France, I found a situation that was well-nigh

* The main child-care organizations were: Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE); Oeuvre de Protection des Enfants Juifs (OPEJ); Union des Juifs pour la Résistance (UJRE); Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO).

miraculous in view of the children's past experiences. Here were no monsters, no savages, no psychotics.

But I soon discovered that these children had serious emotional problems, usually of a neurotic nature. They would have been distinctly abnormal not to have had them. To have lived, as these children had, in Hitler's Europe, was to have inhabited a world where all the accepted modes of human intercourse had been destroyed and all moral standards subverted.

But the behavior patterns formed by these children during the years when they had struggled for sheer survival could not be lumped together in an over-all syndrome labeled "the DP mind." The patterns were too diverse.

A very different psychological analysis was needed for each group—for those who came out of the concentration camps, those who had hidden in the forests during the Nazi occupation, those who had been taken into Gentile homes and had lived under the protection of foster parents, those who had been concealed in convents and monasteries. Nevertheless, there was one common denominator that, to a greater or lesser degree, existed for all DP's, adults and children alike: emotional numbness or shallowness.

I WAS especially impressed by this when I interviewed the children. Each one of them told me the most tragic and bloody stories in a tone of the utmost detachment, even nonchalance, as though they were telling me about some very unimportant event, something that had happened long ago and to someone they hardly knew. At first sight these children resembled schizophrenics, so completely did their capacity for emotional life seem to have vanished. But closer examination revealed that this emotional state was far different from schizophrenia. The French psychiatrist E. Minkowski has called this state "affective anesthesia," and it is developed as a defense against the daily dangers and anxieties to which both those in the concentration camps and those in hiding were continuously exposed. This

emotional anesthetization was not necessarily the result of long years of benumbing terror. In many cases it appeared instantaneously, as the result of a sharp and overpowering trauma.

In the case histories I accumulated in Europe and which were later augmented by our psychiatric team in Cyprus,* this basic emotional configuration crops up again and again. I remember one case—I could cite hundreds—that dramatically expresses what is at work here. The child was about five years old when the persecution of Jews started in her region. Before her parents were taken away by the Nazis, they managed to place the child in the home of some friendly Ukrainian peasants. As the child told me: "I did not look like a Jewish girl, so my parents told me to go to some Ukrainian neighbors and make myself useful by minding their livestock for them." Several days later, while she was in a field with the cattle, a Ukrainian boy passed and showed her a photograph of her father attached to an identity card. When she asked him where he had found it, he told her that the man whose picture this was had just been killed. The child said: "I wanted to cry, but I was afraid to cry because he would have known that I was a Jewish girl if I did. So I didn't cry." The Ukrainian boy then led her to a nearby wood and there she saw her parents, her brothers, and many other Jews lying dead in a freshly excavated pit. "There was so much blood around, I got frightened. I wanted to cry, but again I was afraid that they might kill me." She hid in a cornfield in order to be alone and cry, but soon some people came by and she again had to stifle her tears. When I saw her four and a half years later in a foster home in France, she still could not cry—she had forgotten how.

Her story, unfortunately, is quite typical. Almost all the surviving children I saw had

* On my mission to Cyprus I was accompanied by a psychologist and a psychiatric social worker from the United States. This team was matched by a similar team from Palestine with Dr. Franz Bruehl as psychiatrist.

forgotten how to cry; they had lost the ability to respond with spontaneous emotion to life. Yet, and again I must emphasize this, one could scarcely call them psychotic. Indeed, their vitality in other areas and their eagerness for learning spoke against such a diagnosis. Of course, the repression of emotion is not new to psychopathology; psychiatrists observe it in their everyday practice. But what was new and unusual here was the state of utter apathy in which we found great numbers of children—apathy founded on the wholesale and deep suppression of anxiety. One youth leader aptly described the psychological state of the survivors: "Although the behavior of these children and their vitality seem normal in every respect, they carry deep inside them a cold panic."

When such a long-harbored anxiety breaks through, because of some fresh shock or new traumatic situation, then it resembles somewhat the so-called combat fatigue cases that we saw in the recent war. In fact, in Cyprus I encountered several "nervous breakdowns" among the children who had just arrived from Europe, and in almost every case their condition paralleled the war-time psychiatric pattern. Like the combat soldiers who during the tension of battle seldom cracked, but held up until they were in the security of a rear-area bivouac, these children waited until the threat of death was gone, and then, at the end of their resources, permitted the long-repressed anxieties to break through in manifest symptoms.

But such analogies are only tangentially illuminating. They cannot fully describe the psychological traumata of the survivors. The familiar categories in psychopathology would be fallacious. A number of facts militate against any such comfortable assurance.

THE survivors of the concentration camps, and especially the Jews, had been subjected to a psychological terror unprecedented in world history. David Rousset, a French survivor of the concentration camps, has described in his book, *Les Jours de Notre Mort*, the special position assigned to the

Jews in the concentration-camp system. Beneath everyone—the political prisoners, the misfits, the criminals, the degenerates—stood the Jews. They were the plebeians of the entire structure, despised and mistreated not only by the Nazis but by all the other prisoners. When a new shipment of Jews came to the camps, Rousset relates, the other prisoners were filled with relief, since they knew that it meant a brief respite for themselves; the Jews would absorb a major share of the blows—at least for a time.

One can epitomize the Jews' experience in the concentration camps by a single statement: they were abandoned by the others, and then they abandoned themselves. Except for those deeply religious and mystical, the Jews had neither ideological support (as did the political prisoners) nor the comfort and sustenance of a group (as did the criminals). Freud has claimed that culture has been built on the ruins of the primitive instinctual drives. The concentration camp, that sadistic embodiment of all that is hostile to culture, was in its turn built upon the ruins of the social instinct; and it is no wonder that those people who went through the concentration camps were forced by a crushing set of circumstances to stifle and almost wholly destroy the cultural instinct—the instinct of sociability that binds together all community life with the ties of love and affection—in order to survive.

Human beings simply do not exist in such a situation without making profound internal readjustments. One cannot live for years in a world in which one man kills another for a cigarette, in which cannibalism is a reality, and then revert instantly on liberation to the man one was before. In view of all this, it is truly amazing that the DP's whom we found in Europe were capable of any social expression at all. At the same time, it is impossible to understand the DP as he is now, whether he was an inmate of the camps or not, if one does not understand clearly the enormous dislocation of the spirit Nazi terror wrought in him. Any other evaluation of the DP is motivated more by sentimental considerations than

by a forthright desire to face the facts; and unless one faces these uncomfortable and irksome facts, one cannot hope to help the DP's with the proper sympathetic understanding.

To psychoanalysts, who are accustomed to think in terms of ego strength, that is, an ego able to establish more and more defenses so as not to disintegrate when confronted by overwhelming and extreme situations, the survivors of the concentration camps pose a certain problem. We know that the function of the ego is to mediate between the demands of our instincts and the prohibitions of our inculcated conscience. However, when, as in the concentration camps, the conscience—that social department of the ego, or what psychoanalysis calls the superego—was continually overruled and negated, the ego did not grow stronger. All that did grow stronger was the instinct for self-preservation, and that at the expense of every other drive.

It is well known that prisoners in concentration camps evidenced severe loss of sexual function from the moment of "initial shock" on entering the camps, a fact many writers, old inmates of concentration camps, have already described. Until liberation, when the death threat was finally lifted, most of the men were impotent. It has also been reported that even nocturnal emissions took place only on those days when the prisoner was transferred to the relative safety of the concentration camp's hospital. For the majority of women menstruation was seriously disturbed or ceased; the normal menstrual cycle was resumed only after liberation. This sexual withdrawal of the organism was but one reflection of the deep psychic regression among the inmates of the concentration camps.

In Cyprus, where conditions harked back to the Nazi camps—as we will have an opportunity to discuss later—sexual dysfunctions similar to those in the concentration camps could also be observed. Many of the men we examined stated that they had become impotent soon after their arrival there. And the majority of adolescents even

went so far as to lose all fantasies about sex; those who had begun to masturbate after liberation ceased to do so as soon as they reached Cyprus. True, the crowded conditions and the lack of privacy favored the avoidance of all open sexual activity, yet this was not sufficient to explain the lack of all fantasies and desires as well.

Rorschach tests taken among the Cyprus inmates showed in all cases a profound sexual repression, accompanied by underlying anxiety. Supervisors of the children reported that all the adolescents seemed curiously uninterested in sexual matters. It would appear that the children who came to the concentration camps before puberty or during the latency period all evidenced the marks of delayed psychosexual development. In many cases the girls did not start to menstruate until a year after they had left the concentration camps, sometimes at the age of 17 or even 18; and in a few instances married women of 18 or 19 had not yet menstruated. Interviews seem to confirm the assumption that the same regressive phenomena observed on Cyprus existed to a greater degree in the German concentration camps.

One may well wonder whether Ferenczi's theory that the latency period of sexual development is a heritage of the rigors of the long and threatening glacial epoch, has not found an ironic and tragic confirmation in the emotional effects of the Hitler dictatorship, surely a modern "ice age."

ONE of many similar stories might be cited to demonstrate the distortion of the ego. In Cyprus I interviewed a twenty-three year-old girl who had been in Auschwitz. Her whole family had been killed. At first, she had been put to work in the kitchen, carrying food to the sick. Later, however, she was transferred to the crematorium staff. Her job was to hand towels to the women who were lined up naked every day "to go for a bath." This was the Nazis' version, and she accepted it. Women from her village passed through and never returned, yet she had so completely blocked off the dreadful

reality that she refused to believe that they were actually going into a death chamber. When she told me this story, she could not understand how she could have been so "stupid." And when, after a few conversations with me, she began to remember the cries and screams of the children who had been herded past her, her astonishment grew over her apparent inability to grasp and react to the true situation when it was taking place.

It is clear that the reality had been simply too horrible for the girl to contemplate. She had to deny it, not partially or by some small ruse, but totally and without leaving a shred or trace of it to disturb her half-smothered conscience. Otherwise she could not survive. But when she appears before us as a DP in need of help, facing the need to readjust to life, then we must remember this crippling denial of reality and the profound distortion of the social sense that it inevitably entails.

This girl's experience can stand as a kind of archetype for all. To one degree or another, they have all stifled their true feelings, they have all denied the dictates of conscience and social feeling in the hope of survival, and they have all been warped and distorted as a result.

So the therapeutic measures recommended for this particular case have a general application and significance. First of all, the girl must be made to remember the facts and not the fantasy of the situation in the anteroom of the death chamber. Although in everyday psychiatric practice this is a routine matter, the use of such methods for the victims of Hitler's persecution may seem unnatural and cruel. Yet this is the only road back to psychological health. Such a feat of remembering is, in truth, both impossible and cruel except in an atmosphere of love and understanding that will bolster the patient's weakened confidence and carry her through the first stages of the inevitable shock. The task is to bring her back into human society after her experience on its outermost edges—the concentration camps. To achieve this, she must be surrounded

by people who understand and love her and sympathize with her difficulties. Above all, she must be given the feeling that a community of fellow human beings is ready to welcome her as an equal and comrade and will find her useful work to engage her full capacities as a human being.

In his brilliant analysis of modern civilization's destructive drives, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Sigmund Freud described the profoundest and most frightening war of all, the war between the forces of Eros—the societal and libidinous instincts—and the forces of destructive sadism. But in his most apocalyptic moment Freud could never have imagined that his prophetic words would in the next few years be given such horrible actuality. Never before has the still, small voice of conscience been reduced to so spectral, so ineffectual a whisper—not only in the victimizers but in their victims. Psychoanalysis has always known that civilization was fighting a desperate action against overwhelmingly powerful forces, but we never believed that their "superiority" would be so terribly proven.

So the importance of rehabilitating the DP's is much more than that of salvaging one small group of human beings who have suffered. It is a project that has significance for the whole world; it is, indeed, a reassertion of our belief that the civilizing forces in man may yet win to victory. We cannot expect this to happen quickly or easily. Inevitably, the survivors' steps back to civilization will be faltering and confused, with many mistakes and setbacks. They are all a prey to anxiety, distrust, and hatred. They have all accumulated a great amount of repressed hostility and aggressiveness, for which they could find no outlet during the years of persecution.

AGAINST the background of such an analysis the problem of the rehabilitation of DP's may become clearer; it also becomes more difficult. There is no half-measure that will answer. To attempt to revive the emotional life of people who continue to live in the precarious and threatening atmosphere

of the DP camps of Europe or incarcerated on the purgatorial island of Cyprus, hemmed in by barbed wire and armed guards in an ominous reenactment of the German chapter of their torture, might appear an impossible undertaking. Yet there has been some good and effective work, which has resulted in amazing readjustments and recoveries.

On the other hand, those who were able to go immediately after liberation to Palestine or the United States or some other free environment have shown that they are capable of regaining their balance and health in a very short time. As opposed to these quick recoveries, most survivors who have had to remain in the camps under continuous regimentation have grown more anxious and aggressive. Despite all that continues to be done for them, they see themselves betrayed and abandoned a second time.

The camps on Cyprus are even worse in their effects. In contrast to the DP camps in Europe, inmates are not permitted outside the gates; and many other features are reminiscent of the German concentration camps. Situated on a strip of barren, sun-scorched earth where the scarcity of water is always a source of anxiety, the immigrants are confined in circumstances of overcrowding and restriction of the worst kind. As ought to have been expected, the barbed wire of Cyprus has cruelly resulted in bringing back to many of the immigrants, either by association or by the re-stimulation of ingrained, conditioned responses, some of the behavior patterns of the concentration camps.

Anxieties which were held in abeyance for many years now erupt to the surface. The majority of the complaints are of a psychosomatic nature, all of them accompanied by mild or acute anxiety states.

It was the cases of acute anxiety—the “breakdowns”—among the children, which enabled us, on our trip to Cyprus, to persuade the “leaders” of the young that we had a useful function and that these individual cases might help them to a greater understanding of the general problems.

LEADERSHIP—as provided by the adults assigned by relief or other agencies to guide and take care of separate groups of children—is a crucial matter for the DP's. As can be imagined, after the long years of persecution and confinement, with all instincts subservient to that of survival, the DP's had developed habits of complete dependency and infantilism. When I first encountered DP children in France, I was told by the supervisors of the foster homes that the children formed tightly knit groups presenting a solid phalanx of hostility and suspicion to everyone outside their group. I soon discovered, however, that even within these groups, they had no ties of affection, no friends, no love for one another; they simply huddled together out of habit and extreme fear. In this situation, proper leadership was important, for one misstep could throw back a whole program for weeks.

In the children's village in Cyprus (Kfar Hanoar)* we were able to study closely the relations between the children and their adult leaders. These ranged in type from groups that were cohesive, disciplined, and well-organized to those that were disorderly and near disintegration. Invariably, after examining three or four children in a group, we could determine in advance what kind of leader was at the head of the group. The children unfailingly reflected the anxieties of their leaders.

One group of children we studied was outstanding for its excellent discipline—not the kind of unthinking, rigid discipline practiced by the Irgunists and other extremist groups, but a discipline based on understanding and affectionate relationships. Children in this group with artistic abilities were given free rein to develop them. Moreover, all of them answered our questions with a unique frankness and lack of suspicion. All this was due to their *madrich* or leader, a young man of twenty-seven who, though not a trained psychologist, had great intuitive

* At the time of my visit to Cyprus, the Youth Aliyah had segregated some two thousand children, mostly orphans between the ages of five and eighteen, in a camp of their own.

understanding and insight. When he had first organized the group in Rumania, the children were wild and undisciplined. Then, as he himself put it, he had devised a scheme "by which the restlessness and aggressiveness of the children could find proper outlets." He took them on hikes, went mountain-climbing with them, kept them on the move until they had calmed down. Only after this preliminary maneuver did he begin his educational program.

In contrast to this group which was so cohesive and well integrated, were many others whose leaders demanded blind obedience of each child, and the personal devotion and dependence of each child. If the group had any cohesion, it was only because of this; there was no affection among the children. One such leader told me she regarded herself as a mother substitute. Well, even mothers and fathers are known to be aggressive, and this leader certainly was.

From such practical work we learned that the role of the leader could be likened to that of a catalyst, activating a process of sympathy and group cohesion. If the leader was able to create affectionate attachments within the group and divert aggressive impulses into constructive outlets, his chief goal had been reached. The test of a leader's effectiveness was not his indispensability, but, on the contrary, the ease with which he could be replaced.

There was another youth leader who had brought her group from Poland to Cyprus. At the beginning the children had offered great resistance to her and wanted to return to their Gentile foster-parents, though these no longer had a place for them. She told us that she was often compelled to lock the doors to prevent them from running away. She believed, however, that all the children's conflicts had been solved and that she had been successful in bringing them back to a faith in Judaism. When I pointed out that the children still kept crosses and prayer books underneath their pillows, she brushed this aside as an innocuous addiction to souvenirs. Unfortunately, after having discussed this particular problem with

many of these children, I found it impossible to be as optimistic. Many of them had deep conflicts concerning their Jewishness, which for years had been a secret whose betrayal might mean death—conflicts which would require long study and therapy before they could disappear.

In fact, as a result of the identification that had sprung up during the Hitler years between these children and their Christian foster-parents, a new secret Jew, a kind of Marrano in reverse, had appeared on the scene. Many of these children exhibited anti-Semitic behavior. The case history of a boy of ten in liberated Warsaw came to my attention. He was the greatest anti-Semite in his school, constantly declaring that Hitler should have killed all the Jews. So difficult a disciplinary problem was he that he was given a psychiatric examination. It was discovered that the boy was Jewish and that he had been hidden in a closet for three years by non-Jews. In the European camps I also met children who admitted that they had been maltreated by their foster-parents, yet still wished to return to them: in the world of the jungle that was Europe in the war years, the non-Jewishness of the foster-parents had been the children's only security.

THE process of adjustment, of course, is by no means an easy one. For example, one boy of thirteen, when he first arrived at a kibbutz in Palestine, ran away again and again. When I asked him why he ran away, he could not tell me. But when I asked him why he had finally decided to stay, he pointed to the woman in charge of the children: a middle-aged woman who was one of the original founders of the kibbutz.

In another kibbutz I visited, I was particularly interested in a group of children I had met in Cyprus and who had been sheltered during the war by Gentile foster-parents. Earlier I had found many of them still attached to their foster-parents yet feeling at the same time a sense of guilt. It was a crucial difficulty for them, and I was impressed by the way their problems were handled by a kibbutz leader. This youth leader, who

seemed to have a deep understanding of the children's conflicts, asked them upon their arrival to write letters to their former foster-parents thanking them for their years of care, telling them about their present lives, and so re-establishing contact with them.

If this gifted woman and man represent the best leaders in Palestine, they also demonstrate, by contrast with other leaders—unfortunately too many—Palestine's most urgent problem, that of the character of its leadership. It was Hans Beyth, one of the most gifted leaders of the Youth Aliyah—to the misfortune of all Palestine, he was recently killed by the Arabs after convoying a group of children to Haifa—who stressed this to me, and doubtless his appraisal of the situation is correct. We already know how easy it is for aggressive ideologies to gain a hold among frustrated and anxiety-ridden immigrants. Undoubtedly much of the attraction exerted by the Irgun and Stern groups and their pernicious effect on the Palestine community can be traced to psychological causes of the kind we have described. In times like ours, especially amid such a convulsive and precarious state of affairs as now exists in Palestine, it is not difficult for demagogues to divert the great load of suppressed aggression into anti-social channels. Some "realistic" people may indeed regard the war in Palestine as an excellent safety valve for the immigrants. And yet every psychiatrist knows that such a discharge of aggressive feelings never has a lasting and beneficial effect. The problem for Palestine, as for the world, is to find in peacetime a "moral equivalent of war."

Much of the divisiveness and bitter hostility of the extremist groups in Palestine can only be explained in terms of deep psychological and irrational motivations. Time and again in the camps I came across outright expressions of hatred by one Jewish group of another, and many even expressed hatred of the relief organizations, whom they blamed for all their hardships and suffering. For years they had been subjected to the most terrible punishments at

the hands of a seemingly omnipotent and invulnerable figure: the Nazi master. They had stored up great quantities of unexpressed hostility which had never been loosed on their real enemy. What then took place is what psychoanalysis calls *displacement*—the hostility which should have been directed at the Nazis was now poured forth on the very people endeavoring to help them. And the hostility was released all the more easily because the DP's, like children who attack adults when they are sure they will not be punished for it, knew that there was little fear of retaliation.

ALL these important points must await a further elaboration. But I trust that even in this all too cursory treatment I have succeeded in pointing up the need for planned education and psychological guidance in order to recreate in these thousands of people the ability to live free and mature lives. Unfortunately, conditions in Israel today dictate an intense preoccupation with the rifle. However, if the proper program of education and mental hygiene can be instituted in a peaceful Israel, we will have reason to hope that the accumulated aggressiveness of the remnant may be harnessed to productive activities and the cultivation of the arts of peace.

When I reported on our findings last year in Tel Aviv to a joint meeting of the Neuropsychiatric Association of Israel and all the welfare organizations concerned with the problems of adjustment and rehabilitation of immigrants, I met with profound understanding. The government of Israel has shown itself eager to establish an effective program of mental hygiene; the recent visits to the United States of delegates of the Israel government with the purpose of sponsoring this work is the best testimony to their comprehension of this vital project. A large committee has recently been set up in New York, consisting of psychiatrists, psychologists, and lay people, to assist in the task; in this as in so many other fields, close collaboration between American and Israeli specialists is essential to success.

CITIZEN'S VICTORY: DEFEAT OF THE "COMMON MAN"

The American People and Its Opinion-Molders

ELLIOT E. COHEN

IF THE villain of the Truman "miracle" was the pollster, the hero, by common consent, was not Mr. Truman, but the Truman voter. But he, too, could claim no triumph of foresight. In his millions, he had voted for a candidate whom he had refused, almost unanimously, to bet a single dollar on, at odds of 20-1.

Obviously the deep significance of the victory must be sought just here, in the peculiar character of the Truman vote. In America, where all the sociologists, theoretical and practical, tell us success is God, 23,700,000 people cast their ballots for a candidate they believed predestined to abysmal unsuccess. Why did they do it?

It is much easier to say what the Truman voter voted against, than what he voted for. The fact seems to be that the election gag of October—"Vote for Truman as a protest vote"—became a November reality. With little respect for Truman, with no hope of victory, the majority of the American electorate voted against Dewey, or perhaps more accurately against the Dewey campaign, and what they felt it represented in American politics.

The Dewey campaign was pure Young & Rubicam and Hollywood—the biggest, slickest production, promotion, and exploitation job since *Gone with the Wind*. It was an ad-man's dream of heaven lovingly stage-managed from start to finish, mobilizing

every last technique of the arts of public manipulation. The candidate, his voice and his words, his entrances and his exits, every last detail was a masterpiece of artifice. And how could the *deus* in the heart of the machine be anything but "sure-fire?"—for it was built in the image of Her Whom All Americans Worship—say they—the Bitch Goddess Success. The Dewey campaign had only one message to the people: Here is success on a gold plate—he will win, he has won, win with Dewey! Instead of a campaign the population was treated to a coast-to-coast exhibition of the myth in the flesh. The costume of the idol was inevitable and very shrewd—in the photographs Mr. Dewey was Every American Mother's Dream Come True—the small-town boy of the ads grown up to be the very model of a corporation vice-president. They sold him, too. Yes, apparently the American fathers and mothers said ruefully to themselves, as they cast their ballots, he is the all-successful, he is America's new president—but, as for me *personally*. . . .

As for me, personally, I, John Doe, of right mind and good conscience, before this juggernaut of a bandwagon rolls over me, I, in the privacy of my election booth—

The ironical fact probably is that Dewey was a better man than the cosmetic personality his crew of milliners, couturiers, and voice-and-face plasticians let him be—more competent, more honest, more democratic. It is no secret that he has had many enemies. But none ever maligned him as did his own campaign.

THE Truman vote was not a vote for the Truman personality, either. His three years as president had won him at most a mild respect, a kind of tolerance swinging

THE author of this article on the 1948 presidential election is hardly a political expert—but, at least at this particular time, this is not likely to be considered a disqualification by most. ELLIOT E. COHEN is the editor of COMMENTARY; and it perhaps should be mentioned that his opinions, like those of other writers who appear in our pages, are not official expressions of views either of this magazine or of its sponsors.

between condescension and an occasional surprised admiration. The mythmakers had never found him worthy of their arts, and both his renomination and election campaigns found them decamped almost to the last man. We all see now that Mr. Truman's election would have been impossible without this desertion, not only by the smart politicians and their big-brain camp-followers, but by Mr. Thurmond (who was good for 38 electoral votes for himself and 100 or more for Mr. Truman) and Mr. Wallace (who purged the Democratic party of the Communists, their fellow-travelers, and the genuine political liabilities they represented in the eyes of the American electorate).

The Truman policies, it seems generally agreed, were what the Truman voters voted for. Here again Truman's road was made easier by his opponents: of all the candidates, Truman alone deigned to mention specific political issues and concrete political measures. He told labor the Taft-Hartley Act was iniquitous, and had to go. He told the farmer that price support of agricultural products was beneficent and had to be continued. He told the "minorities" and liberals generally that limitations on civil rights had long ceased to make sense in a presumably democratic America, and that the struggle outlined in the President's Report must be pressed forward. In the hundreds of cities, towns, and hamlets in which he campaigned, he discussed concretely (agree or disagree) the interests and the problems of the people in that locality.

What Truman preached was a revived New Deal, and to implement it he asked first and foremost for the election of a liberal 81st Congress, to replace the "do-nothing" 80th—and only second for his own election. And the evidence indicates that it was the Truman program that the voters cared about—and that their votes for Truman were in the nature of a kindly nod in the direction of the doomed head of the ticket.

The tidal wave of emotion that swept the country the next day was, it was generally felt, as politically significant as the election

itself. People babbled to each other for days, and however they said it, they said pretty much the same thing: "The vote proved America's faith in democracy." To define this somewhat more precisely, this means that the vast majority of Americans still believe that the adult human being has the intelligence and the good will to decide for himself what is best for himself and his country.

It is trite to say that the state of mind of the American people is the dominant political force of the postwar world. A month after the elections what realistic conclusions can we draw as to its mood and temper?

A first guess would be that the American people demonstrated a decided taste for reality politics. Both Mr. Dewey and Mr. Wallace waged "pie-in-the-sky" campaigns; they played ersatz politics, offering the voters abstractions, generalities, clichés, and emotionally charged symbols—of which the chief were their own personality-myths. The packaging and promotion were as super as the intrinsic goods were minuscule. The merchandising geniuses were misled by the fact that, while Americans buy their cigarettes, toothpastes, and other harmless vices that way, they apparently take their politics more seriously. The voters shopped for values; they examined the goods; they gave weight to their own needs and their own interests on the one hand, and, on the other, they looked at issues, policies, and programs.

In essence—and this is the most hopeful portent of the election—the American voter voted for himself, as he knew himself realistically, within the framework of an America which he believed he knew realistically, too. This is political maturity. A large part of the Dewey vote can come under this generalization, too, since undoubtedly many believed that on the facts of his record, discounting his "dream-boat" campaign, he would, as reformist and as efficient administrator, deliver the palpable goods. Politically mature above all was the voters' realistic, long-range judgment that, with or without their man in the White House, their pro-

gram required, chief of all, their kind of Congress and their kind of state governors.

Second—counting in, as we must, the “liberal” Dewey ballots—the vote registered the overwhelming commitment of the American electorate to the New Deal, which may be defined as a kind of middle-of-the-road social democracy, which asks its government to guide the economic process under light check-reins, and expects its leaders to discover the machinery to balance security and freedom. (It is, perhaps, economically to the right of the British Labor government, socially to the left.)

BY THAT same token, the election was a smashing rejection of something that often fobs itself off as democracy but is its opposite—the politics of the “common man.” Both Mr. Dewey and Mr. Wallace, however different their premises, ran “common man” campaigns. The “common man” approach looks upon the vast majority as the *masses*, the untutored many, an undifferentiated glob of nameless, mindless, and will-less beings—a lot of guys named Joe. They exist to do things *for*, or to do things *to*—and in the end, for a very good reason, it comes to the same thing: for in both cases your fellowman is but an object—for your manipulation (for his good, of course).

If its modern origins, emotional overtones, and use are studied, this concept of the “common man” will be recognized as the fine demagogic flower of totalitarian politics, both of the Right and the Left. Nor should there be any great mystery why the same high-burnished copy touch—and the same implied estimate of the nature of the Joes in the audience—can be detected in both Mr. Wallace’s and Mr. Dewey’s speeches. They were written by the same brand of expert.

It is worth pondering a moment on the easy interchangeability of the “common man” word-mongers, whether in politics, selling, or the popular arts. It adds up to no conspiracy that so many of Hollywood’s most successful screen writers were at one time or another Stalinist sympathizers. The

fact was that their kind of writing geared in most easily with what the producers—surely no Stalinists—believed “their public” wanted. The common denominator was the conviction that the audience are boobs (really an affectionate word) who mean well, but who have only the mentality to appreciate the simplest stereotypes.

The coincidence of such disparate minds in respect to the “common man” comes in turn from the fact, one would guess, that both their philosophies are by-products of certain organizational and commercial necessities of vast, highly-industrialized societies. Men must fit into the machinery, as workers, consumers, and rank-and-filers, and—without malevolence but by the sheer nature of the process—it is easier to fit them in as mindless objects, ambulatory hands, stomachs, and yes-sayers, mass-marching in peace and war, than as men.

As against all this, Americans voted that they were men—not “common men”—and that they intended to govern themselves accordingly. Re-enter, on the stage of world history, the citizen—a little 18th century, to be sure, but seasoned by two full centuries of experience. Men felt that they had joined hands with the democrats of day before yesterday, too; they talked of Jackson, Lincoln, Wilson, Debs, and Bryan, as well as FDR.

Socially, in that deep composite of emotions which we call “identification,” the country showed itself still democrat. The beaming smiles on the faces of many Dewey supporters after the election may well have meant that most Americans, of whatever class, still identify themselves with the fortunes of the social and economic underdog. (And if the vote on the civil-rights issue, at least in the Northern states, means anything, this identification includes the disadvantaged alien, Jew, and Negro.) Psychologically, at least, we don’t seem as yet to have succeeded in growing a ruling class, much less a master group or race. On the level of conscious politics, it is clear that there is little sign of that polarization of conviction and identification that sets up

fascist against Communist. What stands behind Truman today is certainly the biggest and most mixed coalition of diverse groups ever seen in times of peace.

II

FOR one group in the American populace the election returns were catastrophic beyond words. There was no member of the Fourth Estate—the men who live by mind and pen—who did not feel that as a group they were, and deservedly, a mockery and a derision in the eyes of all decent people. If the profession had had half the honor of Japanese, Abercrombie and Fitch would have been sold out of stainless steel hara-kiri knives by noon. But trust the boys to be cute about the whole thing: a one day's beating of the breast, a ritual dish of crow in the public plaza—and back again at the old stand. (Not those horrible pollsters, of course. First *they* have to stand in the corner *two* days, and wash their figures once over lightly.)

With disarming candor, Mr. Reston, of the Washington bureau of the New York Times, in an open letter to his editor, stated a part of what every American knows: the story of one of the great moments of decision in American history had been completely misreported, botched, and manhandled; and the gentlemen of the press, the national periodicals, and the radio were almost unanimously and equally guilty. For all the light and guidance the American people got from them, be it through news, features, polls, political analysts, commentators, columnists, editorials, articles, pictures, publishers' statements—better they had never existed.

It was clear that, while the American people took the election seriously and responsibly, the press did not. It was not merely that they misplayed the results, or disagreed with the majority verdict. It was that the gentlemen of the press showed no awareness whatever of what interested, concerned, or troubled Americans, what they were feeling and what they were thinking.

In the past twelve months, there was almost no political writing in this country

about the American scene worthy of the name, or of the year 1948. Some about Europe, almost none about the United States. There was hardly a single political writer in America who, on performance, could be ranked with twenty in the British Isles.

Three days after Mr. Reston's penitent letter, he was back in Washington, wiring in the same superficialities. Now Mr. Reston, as is well known, is an extremely able, well-informed writer, jealous to a fault of the honor of his profession. This suggests—since his case is representative—that we would do well to look for the key to the mystery not to the working practitioners but to the present-day nature of newspapers (and of opinion-molding organs generally) as institutions—the actual function they have come to perform in our society, and the self-assumed (often unconscious) boundaries on thought and writing that the process of modern "communications" seems to enforce.

NEWSPAPERS (and other "communications") are today vast commercial enterprises, engaged in selling their products in a mass market. Like all such enterprises, whether they manufacture soap, breakfast foods, or radio phonographs, the nature of their product—in the case of publishers, "reading matter"—is determined by what the public wants (or what they can be persuaded to want—i.e., sold). The public ("our readers") is visualized as the mass consumer, as a mindless integer driven by certain urges, which can be statistically determined, and whose behavior can be predicted, also statistically. The saleable package—in this case "the paper," "the radio program"—will be scaled to the lowest common denominator, the universal factors that customers are presumed to share by their intrinsic human nature. The criteria for what is "newsworthy" follow accordingly; the idols of the craft are such touchstones as the following: "News." Human interest. Sport (The Battle of the Century). Fortune (rags to riches—but today chiefly betting). What to expect (also betting). Entertainment. Personalities (celebrities). "Production values." Behind the

scenes ("inside stuff"). Sales appeal. Promotion angles.

It requires little insight to see that this adds up to a process of selectiveness that molds written words into easy clichés, familiar stereotypes, the superficially exciting, the formulas and simplifications geared to instinct and emotion. Serious, thoughtful writing—Who wants it? Who will pay for it—in quantity?

It is this climate of opinion—or, rather, of no-opinion—that explains for the most part how the 1948 campaign and election got itself reported and interpreted as it was: given the established machine dies and molds, nothing else was possible. This is why the campaign story was "covered" and "displayed" as a glorified dramatic sports spectacle, a sort of Epsom Downs, Pimlico, and Kentucky Derby rolled into one, with the chief interest focussed on which horse could be bet on to win and the press acting as one great Racing Form bent on tipping off the public.

Of course, so-called class and institutional self-interest played their role in the publishing world's choice of their candidate. But what they printed, since publishers are no less honest and/or astute than the rest of us, seems to have been almost wholly determined by the customary operating machinery of mass commerce. One is convinced that they did not consciously slant their columns; it was rather that their whole process was permeated by the values which, in Karl Polanyi's* apt phrase, make up "the market mentality"—that view of society in which the human being is defined as an object ("the common man," "the consumer"), to be "satisfied," at least "sold," and in which the product (in the case under consideration—political writing) is a mass-produced commodity.

Significantly, the opinion-molding profession, in the world we live in, has grown and prospered beyond the archaic stage when "publishers," "editors," "writers" added up

to most of the story. Today the profession has burgeoned to include, also, the technicians and executives of advertising, publicity, public relations, merchandising, "exploitation," market research, scientific communications, and polling—and the "media" have multiplied—radio, film, book clubs, television, etc. (Incidentally, it must be recognized that the pollster's "science," whether its origin be the psychological laboratory or the market-research bullpen in the advertising agency, is by now, as an analysis of its handiwork will prove, but another cultural adjunct and assimulant to the market need and the market mentality of business and "communications.") As might have been anticipated in what is essentially a commercial operation, "business brains" have won the larger institutional weight and rewards, as against the members of the "creative" craft. But even more interesting, all the sub-branches seem to have become interchangeable, especially on the administrative (i.e., control) level; the vice-president of promotion can turn up tomorrow as the program director of a radio chain, and the vice-president in charge of advertising as the editor of a book publishing house.

SOME anthropological notes on the Tribe of Red Faced Men, through whose combined genius the 1948 debacle of the opinion-molding profession was achieved, may be relevant. It is a tight little community, inhabiting a small territory four blocks wide and ten or so blocks long centering around Radio City, with business suburbs of the same narrow geographical dimensions in Hollywood and Chicago, and residential suburbs in certain selected small areas. The Tribe, in a word, lives in a tiny reservation almost hermetically sealed off from contact with the vast majority of Americans. With the perfection of airplane travel it is easily possible for a "communications vice-president" (or a top-drawer columnist or commentator, for that matter) to spend months literally without seeing anything or anyone outside of the similar walls, in whatever city, of

* See his "Our Obsolete Market Mentality" (COMMENTARY, February 1947) in the series, "The Crisis of the Individual."

fluorescent-lighted offices, hotel suits, and cafés; or of the parties, in homes of identical décor, of people of "our own kind," talking "our" language. A profession whose job is presumably communication had, without anyone realizing it, become so stratospherically isolated as to produce what the record shows it produced.

At the top levels, the communications industry merges with a somewhat larger group, of interesting social and occupational composition, which thereby comes to play a crucial role in American opinion. Around the tables at the 21 Club and Toots Shor in New York, the Pump Room of the Ambassador in Chicago, and Chasen's and Romanoff's in Los Angeles, everybody who is really anybody can be found, all the "men who are in the know": the managerial bureaucracy and "top creative people" of the institutions of mass communication and arts—but other noteworthy folk as well: late-blooming industrial kings and princes of the new big money of the war and pre-war 40's, younger sons of earlier corporate wealth, big-time operators of some of the more informal areas of business and business control: black market, gray market, and the more respectable extra-legal "business associations"; also the big sports promoters and their top stars, the bookmakers and the gamblers. And a sprinkling of politicians and government people.

To be sure, few members of the working press are found in these high precincts; but they live and aspire in a professional world which regards Mr. Walter Winchell and similar other columnists, who do make their offices there, as the recognized top *political* opinion-molders of our day. Everyone knows how well Mr. Winchell and his confreres are equipped for their position by their professional origins, associations, intellectual values, and knowledge of political history, foreign and domestic; but who will deny that they sound the pitch-pipe for the whole industry?

It is indeed a pity that no research foundation has taken "café society" seriously as an object of study: they might find that just here, on this mental desert island where the "wise guys" sit washing each other's linen

and where many other national thought patterns are set, the self-delusive fantasy of the "Dewey sure-thing" was gestated. Not planned or conceived; at this stage the group is incapable of thought or conspiracy: just dreamed up out of the very finest inside dope.

It is laboring the obvious to say that what we have today is a fairly complete bankruptcy of political thinking and communication in America, of whatever stripe, on whatever level. What prospect is there of new standards in thought and interpretation on the political and economic life and problems of America?

On the less promising side is the fact that the technological factors of centralization, huge investment, and mass market necessities are, year after year, in faster acceleration. The major phases of the phenomenon are ever-increasing chain operation, national mass syndication and distribution, and the "tie-in" with the two great dominant mass communication industries, Hollywood films and the radio networks, as well as with business as a whole. Nor do operational controls and market-values fail to permeate the surviving realms of higher culture. There are the book clubs and the giant concert booking agencies—and there are other recent happenings.

The other week, the Sunday editor of a great metropolitan daily brought his literary editor to heel—too much personal opinion by the reviewers, the "news" viewpoint should rule. The best-intentioned of men, he would be outraged if anyone implied that this mandate means that ideas are being eased out, and that his literary page must inevitably become a part of the sales-promotion arm of the book trade.

Recently the editorial program of *Fortune* magazine underwent an overhauling. In recent years, the magazine had had perhaps the most knowledgeable group of writers and editors in America, and, alongside of its reporting of business and industry, the reader could find some of the finest interpretive analyses not only of business and

governmental developments here and abroad but of the basic political, economic, and social issues of our time. But henceforth, one hears, *Fortune* will be the ambassador and apologist of American business enterprise; it is not the magazine's business to interpret the thought, movements, and changing civilization of a globe in ferment. It is to act—presumably as high priest—as the defender of the orthodox laws of economics, as handed down from Adam Smith. This has the appearance of an exit from the world of ideas into a quite different realm, that of business promotion.

If one again cites from Mr. Luce's enterprises, it is in genuine respect for his acknowledged pre-eminence as leader and pace-setter for more than two decades in the whole field of popular journalism. For three years, it was known that, on his instructions, a team of his best men was working on a projected magazine of *ideas* (the best ideas of the best minds all over the world) to be called *Measure*. In the end, the project "folded," without even a single trial flight off the ground.

Now it seems obvious that there is a need and a market for such a magazine. It is also obvious that, with only a fraction of Mr. Luce's resources and with the wealth of good minds lying around everywhere, producing such a magazine should be easy. The fact that the great Luce organization found itself unable to deliver the goods might well indicate no failure of mind or heart, but a technological cul-de-sac of mechanical and fiscal evolution.

We know that the great baking industry finds itself helpless to bake a decent loaf of bread. Maybe Mr. Luce's belt-line, too, has organized itself and priced itself out of the market. Can it be that, as purveyors of the ideas and opinions required for the needs of the new political climate into which the American people is moving, great enterprises like Mr. Luce's are as over-specialized and obsolescent as was the dinosaur?

BEING neither an economic determinist nor a technological expert, this writer would

not wish to bring in a premature verdict. Maybe the communications industry, or some forward-looking, inspired part of it, can make a leap forward. The dormant nerve of public responsibility has had a jolt; but some even more central ganglia have suffered shock. After all they have not only failed the people, Republicans and Democrats alike; they have failed their business as a business. And isn't there a possible new popular market waiting for a new product? Also, might not the American entrepreneur, strictly from business considerations, think himself better served, at this new, tangled, threatening juncture of affairs, by intelligent journalistic guidance to industrial thinking and planning than by mere press-agentry and promotional aid?

At this writing, the omens are mixed indeed. In most places, after a figurative (only figurative) purge of the scapegoat pollsters, business is much as usual. Here and there, there have been searchings of hearts—notably in the case of the two great New York dailies and *Time*. But most post-election writing classifies itself as self-justification and the distortion of the facts of the political scene through the same old lenses. Thus we have seen the resurgent smog blotting out the new landmarks of political reality revealed by the election. No, the voter wasn't New Deal. No, the real voters didn't vote. No, labor didn't play a key role in the election. No, the farmers really voted Republican, or meant to. Etc. Etc. And we have had the sudden inflation of a Truman myth—here the *Times* and *Time* were both sinners. Truman is probably a great political figure in his own right: but he is no more the Paul Bunyan of today than he was the Casper Milquetoast of yesterday; from this misleading build-up can only come a lulling of popular political alertness, followed by new frustration.

Given the present operating mechanism, we can guess that, while adjustments are possible, major improvements may prove another matter. After all, why change the

car just because of a single minor election-day accident; a new chromium bumper, or a shift in the sales line might do just as well: customers have short memories. The other alternative, retooling the model, takes, as everyone knows, millions of dollars, and two years.

On the morning after, it is only elementary fairness to wait and see, permitting oneself only one—no doubt gratuitous—caution to the master-builders, as they ponder, we hope, the blueprints of new models. No car has as yet been built that can go in two directions at once. For publishers a choice would seem to be indicated between “entertainment” (vicarious satisfaction) and enlightenment (intellectual clarification and guidance). Or, even granting that the two can be combined in the same paper or magazine (*Life*, the *Daily News*), it is crystal clear they can’t be in the same text. The hybrid will always be nearer show business than truth.

The present dominance of this opinion-entertainment mixture in our liberal and “quality” periodicals will temper our post-election expectations from their directions also. Their election performance was very little better, indeed of pretty much the same cloth as the mass publications. The two traditional liberal weeklies have for a decade floundered in the swamps of “common-man” politics, too often of the fellow-traveler variety; and their particular brand of simplification has prevented them from being fruitful reading even for the typical high-school boy for whom the publisher of one announced two years ago his magazine would henceforth be edited. As for the two surviving serious general monthlies, the blight of popularization has been heavy in their pages—personalities, topicality, entertainment—and one of them has had more than a light case of the Russian disease.

III

ONE of the great political chapters of human history lies before us. In effect, to recapitulate a bit, the election put the world on notice that the American people had

voted themselves a new lease on freedom, and that in a reasonable time they wished their house put in liveable, decent order. For politicians and their brain trusts—both Democratic and Republican—this was in turn, we would think, an expressed mandate to settle down to work, in an adult, mature way, and deliver the goods. For the working press, in all its branches, whatever its party commitments or sympathies, there was also a kind of “last chance” ultimatum to report and interpret the present and the years ahead in sober, reliable, socially responsible terms—or else.

For all the Democrats’ decisive victory, the people were still committed to the two-party system—two *not* three, but, equally emphatically, *two* not one. The unfolding story would be played out, at least for the next four years, in the old dialectic between Democrats and Republicans. True, a clear majority of the American people, comprising a loose coalition of chiefly labor, middle-class, farmer, and “liberal” elements, today accept the Democratic party as their chosen instrument; but, on the other hand, almost nobody has any confidence that this party is equal to its mandate or its task, or even has the capacity to hold itself together, under its present leadership group, to win the 1952 election.

For the Democratic party, in other words, the election was no vote of confidence, only a renewed option. All the old unsolved problems, most of them inherited from the old New Deal, stared up at Mr. Truman from his desk when he returned from Key West. Russia. The political policy of the Marshall Plan. The reconstruction of Germany. Atom bomb policy. China. Israel. High prices (Mr. Truman promised they would be lower, while farm subsidies would stay high). Fiscal and banking policy *vis-à-vis* inflation. Civil rights. Taft-Hartley (marked for defeat, but what steps to check-rein irresponsible labor shut-downs, an almost equal mandate?). Housing. Etc. Etc. And in the matter of associates, Mr. Truman has always shown himself vulnerable; he has exhibited an awesome gift for selecting men

who were not of his own mind, or of no mind at all.

What kind of organizational force would the liberal-labor-farmer forces organize behind the administration to insure the effective implementation of the new New Deal, and its continuity? Having seen how greatly independent organized activity paid off in 1948, labor is not likely to sink into its previous between-elections lassitude. It was organization, not publicity, that proved effective (compare the AFL-CIO effort with that of the old PAC); and this lesson is not likely to be lost either. Are we to see the building and mushrooming of independent or semi-independent labor and liberal organizations operating within the broad framework of the Democratic party? There is ample warrant in American tradition, as political observers since de Tocqueville in 1831 can testify, for the banding together of citizens for special interests close to their hearts, within a larger loyalty—a pattern which holds nothing in common with the oft-feared political fragmentation of America into racial or national minority groups, of which incidentally the 1948 election saw none, organized or unorganized. But for all their recent progress in organization, the various liberal and labor groups are, by common consent, still laggard in the crucial fields of political and economic policy, internal education, and public opinion. And, coincidentally, it is just here that the Truman administration itself is most vulnerable.

POLICY thinking and policy interpretation—both high level and low level—are in very short supply, inside and outside the White House. If one takes for granted, as somehow forthcoming, the technical brains necessary to think through and blueprint the various phases of the President's program, what about the political thinking that must guide the citizens through the shoals of competing plans, theories, propagandas, ideologies from here and abroad; and what of the task of interpreting the problems, plans, and purposes of the new New Deal, both to supporters and opponents?

Just one phase of the problem: To paraphrase a famous sentence from the political testament of Huey Long, "The totalitarian movement that captures America will win under the guise of an anti-fascist, pro-democratic crusade." No more crucial problem faces the American people today than to learn just what is "Left" and what is "Right"; that is, which policies will enhance freedom and which lead to the totalitarian path. The Stalinists have capitalized most heavily on current confusion, since they are for such "progressive" policies as nationalization; but other totalitarians too can profit from it.

The political extremists, of both wings, have been eliminated from posts of influence both within the ranks of labor and the two parties, but potentially totalitarian thought-patterns, moral attitudes, political concepts are shot through the whole fabric of American liberal thinking, of both camps, intertwining with more authentically democratic threads—and not totally of European import, either, but many of them strictly homespun. There is a huge job of analysis, rethinking, and education to be done, if American democracy is to protect itself internally and externally from the demagoguery of incipient totalitarianisms, and clarify its aims and its case.

Will there be a regrouping within the Republican party? Few think it possible that it will once more take its stand by the twice-rejected slogan of American Free Enterprise, naked and unabashed. What will be the political composition, the ideological character of this substantial, legitimate opposition party? Will it take the road—which in most recent elections it has balked at—of developing intelligent, realistic, conservative economic thinking and planning, on a level comparable with Britain's?—there are political theoreticians of similar rank available on these shores. Or will it come to the electorate in 1952 with another set of empty abstractions, trusting to personality or verbal legerdemain to win the masses? Will the Republican party drive the word-changers from the temples?

An all-important complex problem in the

months ahead will be that of our cooperative relations with governments and political forces abroad, some of them to the "left," some of them to the right of us. Here we may expect both honest and demagogic attacks from the Right and the pro-Soviet "Left."

And if the war skies get very black, or if economic depression strikes, the party-line apparatus is still with us, not to speak of the crackpots and the demagogues, the race inciters and the anti-Semites, grooming themselves mostly in the South and on the West Coast, and waiting for the great day to mobilize the masses, for either ticket.

OF THEIR organs of opinion Americans will demand, as this struggle unfolds, not that they be all of one mind, but that they be of some mind. To help guide them in securing their aim, fuller democratic living in their time, they require, one would say, not unanimity—that by now they know leads the other way—nor the right party labels or the right ideological hallmarks, but simply that old American specific: free, informed, intelligent discussion.

Here is an assignment worthy of all the bright young men in a thousand offices, and their maturing elders with the gray temples, not to speak of the social scientists on the various campuses. And we trust that we will see labor and liberal organizations taking a serious share of the responsibility, at last crossing that publishing Rubicon on whose shores they have long been shrinking. In view of the election, can labor leaders continue to argue against the necessity—and legitimacy—of spending some of the funds now earmarked for welfare, publicity, public relations, and education on developing their own adult newspapers and magazines (and expanding those hardy independent perennials surviving in this field) for the advancement of labor's own interests, and the democratic enlightenment of its own ranks and

of the general public? Also, can they avoid stifling their own offspring with house-organ limitations; or, as happened with Britain's *Daily Herald*, with lack of editorial freedom or responsibility and bureaucratic narrow-mindedness? And perhaps we shall see such organizations as the ADA finding the resources to implement their long-rumored ambitions to fulfil for liberals and labor the same publishing role as did the Fabian Society in Britain; and there are also the publications of various voluntary groups, dedicated to diverse democratic causes—in which category this magazine belongs—and the increasingly robust quarterlies of a number of universities, not to speak of the universities themselves, the research institutes and foundations, and the government departments.

AND perhaps we cannot yet count out the great mass circulation newspapers and magazines—nor even the radio. Americans have never worshipped the machine for its own sake, but only as a servant, and in the long run Americans have a way of making their wants known to the machine-operators and having them met. The printed word in this country still has its granted charter of freedom from government control, and the owners of this precious right are shrewd enough, we would guess, not to gamble on losing it through sheer public irresponsibility. And there is still the fact—and it would be ungrateful not to recall it—that our newly mature electorate owes much of what political education it has to the great newspapers and to such periodicals as *Newsweek*, *Life*, *Look*, *Collier's*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*, and to the Elmer Davises and the Quincy Howes.

"Give the people light, and they will find the way—" With precious little light given them, they themselves have found the road. Perhaps the profession can give them light for the next stage on the difficult journey.

CAN WE BELIEVE IN JUDAISM RELIGIOUSLY?

An Ethical Faith Is Not Enough

EMIL L. FACKENHEIM

RIGHTLY or wrongly, I have always thought highly of Abraham, the first Jew. It was not the condescending esteem we feel, say for an ancient Greek scientist who appreciably furthered scientific thought but whose ideas would appear naive today to any college senior. The greatness of Abraham, to my mind, surpassed any "contribution" to the "progress of ideas": it was a greatness equally great at any time. The relationship I had thought it permissible to have to Abraham was a *direct* one, conceiving Abraham not as separate from us by many links in the chain of progress, but as the

Like many others in this sceptical era, Jewish theological writers have had some difficulty in accepting their Judaism, or advocating it, on truly religious grounds. Most Jewish religious apologists of our day tend to commend Judaism to us as a desirable ethical influence, or a handy kind of psychotherapy, or a rich tradition of wisdom literature to which we can occasionally turn for solace and insight, or a cement for group solidarity or survival. But when faced with the blunt question: "Do you really believe in the claim of *this* religion to be your unique, historically-covenanted social tie with the Divine—do you think it is the eternally true?" they react, more often than not, with embarrassment and confusion. EMIL L. FACKENHEIM here attempts to point the way to a reconstruction of Jewish theology that would provide a solid *religious* foundation for Jewish religious belief in our age. Dr. Fackenheim was born in Halle, Germany, in 1916, and was ordained as a rabbi in Berlin in 1939. From 1943 until recently he has been the rabbi of Congregation Anshe Sholom, in Hamilton, Ontario. He received his doctorate in philosophy at the University of Toronto in 1945, and teaches in the graduate and undergraduate schools at that university. He has contributed numerous articles to the academic journals, and is at present engaged on a major work on the theory of human nature in traditional Judaism.

here-and-now guide and father of every mere Jew aspiring to be a good Jew. In taking Abraham with such live seriousness, I readily admit that I was influenced by Kierkegaard's magnificent *Fear and Trembling*. But I also believed it to have the backing of Jewish tradition.

RECENTLY, however, I suffered a sad loss. Rabbi Joseph H. Gumbiner's essay "Existentialism and Father Abraham" (COMMENTARY, February 1948), discovered for me that Abraham is a pure illustration of "ethical monotheism," as distinguished from Kierkegaard's Abraham, who experienced an agonized conflict between the ethical and the religious.

Alas, I am now deprived of Abraham. I can take small comfort in the assurance that I need not be ashamed of him; that, on the contrary, he was further advanced in his moral ideas than his contemporaries, being the first to hit upon the truth that child-sacrifice is unacceptable to God. Abraham has been put in his place . . . and it is a relatively low one.

To Rabbi Gumbiner (and, he claims, to Judaism) Abraham represents no more than a step in the moral progress of mankind, and this progress is necessarily measured by standards which are universal, and superior to the specific example of Abraham. Thus is destroyed any direct relation we might have to Abraham as a guide and father; for every Tom, Dick, and Harry now knows what it took Abraham such a long struggle to realize: that Judaism is "ethical monotheism." And if we imagined him alive today we should be compelled to instruct him in all the refinements and further progress that have been made since his important—but by now banal—discovery.

LET us for the moment resign ourselves to the loss of Abraham. Another question quickly presents itself as even more important: whether the criteria which Rabbi Gumbiner applies to Abraham are to be applied to Jewish tradition as a whole. If what is good and bad or living and dead in Abraham is to be measured by outside standards of moral progress, why not follow the same procedure with Moses, the prophets, the rabbis? By what right can we exempt any part of the Jewish past from this kind of valuation? *On this question depends the fate of Jewish theology.*

That may sound like a grandiose assertion, but it is inescapable. What is more, it explains why we can rightly speak of the non-existence of a modern Jewish theology. *For it has not been asserted in modern times in any self-consistent or tenable form that Jewish tradition (or any part of it) supplies truths or authoritative standards directly obligatory for modern man or modern Jew—truths or standards that transcend the social and cultural norms of our day.*

The question "What is Judaism?" may be posed in two forms. One of these, the purely historical one, does not interest us here. What concerns us is the question "What is *valid* or *true* Judaism?"—the Judaism to which we are obligated and which defines what is a good Jew, here and now. To Rabbi Gumbiner it is "ethical monotheism," to others it is ethical nationalism, to others again it is something else—potentially if not in actuality. What happens in these cases is that some external principle and ideal is employed, with whose help is selected the "essence" of Judaism. Rabbi Gumbiner may deny that his principle is extraneous to Judaism, but the mere fact that he singles out "ethical monotheism" from a tradition which is, to say the least, also a lot of other things, presupposes a previous, superior yardstick as to what is living and dead, or important and unimportant in Judaism.

This procedure is typical of modern Jewish "theology." Jewish tradition is approached as something considered vaguely as either "inspired," in some sense "true," or "morally

progressive." The question immediately arises whether, as Jews, we are obligated to this tradition because of these attributes or merely because it is Jewish. Obviously it cannot be the latter—or at least in that case this obligation has nothing to do with theology: it is pure nationalism. We are, then, obligated to the "truths" and "inspired teachings" in our tradition. But how do we measure them? We can only measure them by criteria of *general* reason, *general* ethics, and *general* philosophy: monotheism is the "purest form of religious thought," the "prophetic ethic" is "most advanced," "up-to-date" and so forth.

But if we follow this procedure (and it is difficult to see how any type of "modern" Jewish thought can do otherwise), two fatal implications immediately follow:

(1) The whole of Jewish tradition becomes at once superfluous, for the simple reason that we are certain of our basic moral and religious criteria prior (logically prior) to our judgment as to what is living and dead in Judaism. We could as easily deduce "ethical monotheism" from pure reason, or derive it from pragmatic criteria—which ever our philosophic preference. I do not mean, of course, that the Jewish tradition becomes practically valueless; it may continue to be necessary for the inspiration of individuals and a people. But from a strictly theoretical viewpoint the conclusion is inescapable that if I am to read that tradition with the notion that what is authoritative in it depends on my judgment, and not on the intrinsic religious truth and authority of that tradition itself, then the perusal of this tradition is no different from that of any other valuable literature. I am then a Jew as I may be a Platonist or Kantian or pragmatist. And my religion is *essentially* a religion of reason, intuition, or ecstasy; it is not *essentially* Jewish religion.

Some of the Reconstructionists understand this implication when they admit that the basic ideas of Judaism are to be derived from reason, and are therefore, at least potentially, basic to *any* (and all) highly developed religions; their defense of Jewishness

lies in the no doubt correct insight that in practical life no abstract religion is possible, and that it must crystallize itself in definite patterns, forms of civilization. Hence, a Jew may find good grounds for carrying on the stream of Jewish tradition if he is convinced to begin with that he ought to live the universal truth in the particular Jewish pattern. But that he should so live it cannot be shown *theologically*. At best we can adduce only practical (social, national, etc.) reasons why he could not just as well become a follower of Unitarianism, Bahai, or Ethical Culture.

(2) This brings us to our second difficulty. If Jewish tradition (or any part of it) is true or obligatory not because it is Jewish or tradition but simply because it is, as a body of thought, convincing, then it must be equally true and obligatory for all men. There is not the slightest theological justification, in that case, for the separateness of the Jewish people. Our obligation is no longer to Jewishness but to truth and goodness, and, while in a world full of falseness and evil there are good grounds for continuing Jewish tradition as a convenient force against them, this is only a tactical consideration; essentially, we should be obligated to truth itself—the truth which is the object of all men of good will.

In other words, modern Jewish theology has not really succeeded in showing—in theologically valid terms—that Jews should continue to be Jews, and that to be a good Jew may include, but must necessarily transcend, the obligation to be a good man.

Now it may very well be that we can philosophically demonstrate what Hermann Cohen called a "religion of reason" and show that, in actual fact, Judaism alone of all the historical religions conforms to it. In that case we might be well satisfied with giving loyalty to our Jewish tradition only until such time as there would evolve a more universal religion embodying the "religion of reason." Many of the early modernists certainly believed this, and could therefore be satisfied with understanding

the Jewish "mission" as a relative one—a temporary, special, historical obligation to the "religion of reason." It is the contention of this essay, however, that a "religion of reason" cannot be fully satisfactory to modern man and that Judaism is not identifiable with it—unless it be a Judaism distorted to fit the requirements of modern rationalism.

But we must first ask another question: is Jewish theology possible at all? Is it possible to have a discipline which claims to attain truth and validity, and *ipso facto* universality—for what is true is universally true, and what is valid is valid for all men—and yet is particularly Jewish—that is, assigns a special position to a specific tradition, and a special task to a specific people?

Our answer is, for the present, that *classical* Jewish theology (i.e. the theology of ancient and medieval times) has demonstrated this possibility. Classical Jewish theology starts out with the concept of *revelation* which is by definition *supernatural*. By reason of this single concept, classical Jewish theology differs radically from anything so called in modern times: it really is Jewish theology. *For it finds its justification in the formal assertion that the criteria of its validity lie in the revelation itself—in the fact of its being revealed.*

Traditional Torah and what the moderns with vast equivocation call "Torah" differ radically in that the former is, in principle, absolute instruction, whereas the latter is merely random confirmation of the values to which the pupil subscribes to begin with. The fact that the traditional Jew may have been arbitrary in his interpretations of the Torah is not of primary importance; the important thing is the assertion of the absolute authority of the revelation as such. (That he was aware of the dangers of subjectivism or "humanism" as regards interpretation is evident from his belief in the necessity of a *Torah she-b'al-peh* in addition to the *Torah she-bikh'tav*—a revealed interpretation over and above the revelation itself.)

This conception, we say, really *was* Jewish theology: (1) It entailed a direct obliga-

tion to the Jewish tradition instead of encouraging a selection capable of confirming one's presupposed values. Abraham, Moses, or the prophets were not men exemplifying the view of progress current at the time; they were, at least in theory, direct authority. (2) Reason and human capacity were of inestimable importance, but they were not entirely sufficient—at least not sufficient for being a good Jew; for in that case the revelation would have been superfluous. (3) The obligation to be a good Jew over and above being a good man was theologically demonstrable: for whatever reasons, there was a Law of Moses which, unlike the Law of Noah, was obligatory not for all mankind but for Israel alone.

LET us assume for the rest of this essay that medieval Judaism is unacceptable to the modern Jew, and that the concept of revelation, at least in the sense of a written code of law and doctrine, has been destroyed beyond recovery by historical criticism. Can we fall back on the "religion of reason"—"ethical monotheism"?

Twentieth century insight finds the "religion of reason" profoundly unsatisfactory. The difficulty is not so much whether we can philosophically justify its basic notions; for the present purpose we may disregard the fact that many present-day philosophies deny, in the name of reason, the very meaning of a concept of God and moral value. We may disregard the assertions that the "religion of reason" is untrue; but we must face the fact that it is inadequate to meet the human needs that it presumably serves. Irving Kristol, in his incisive criticism of Milton Steinberg's *Basic Judaism* (COMMENTARY, January 1948), has shown precisely this. A religion which lives by the ideals of reason *alone* (i.e. without an existing God in addition to an idea of God—an existing God who reveals himself supernaturally) can be satisfactory only where it is believed that the gap between the envisaged ideal and the lived reality is not crucial; that it is a matter of degree only, and that it will be progressively bridged.

A "religion of reason" requires the con-

viction that there are few human ills which more effort will not heal. But what religiously sensitive persons of the 20th century have come to realize is that moral progress in degree, important though it be, does not span the gap in kind: there are conflicts in existence which can never be solved by a little more effort. Modern men have become aware of the tragic element in life.

As Kristol puts it: "The horror that breathes into our faces is the realization that evil may come by doing good—not merely *intending* to do good, but *doing* it." This the "religion of reason" cannot understand. Nor is it equipped to face the fact that in the 20th century, men—all of us—find themselves compelled to commit or condone evil for the sake of preventing an evil believed to be greater. And the tragedy is that we do not know whether the evil we condone will not in the end be greater than the evil we seek to avert—or be identical with it.

The "religion of reason," we increasingly recognize, is the illusion of an expanding bourgeois civilization. It is compelled, especially in a time of crisis, to discourage ultimate questions as to good and evil, as to the ultimate consequences of one's moral action. It is compelled to become the religion of the philistine, "a comfortable religion for an uncomfortable world."

FORTUNATELY, Judaism is not identifiable with the bourgeois "religion of reason." True, it is a religion of reason *also*, but it is more than that. And one of the first requirements for a *real* reconstruction of Jewish theology is to protest against the falsification and banalization Judaism has suffered by most, if not all, of its liberal interpreters. The rationalists of the 19th century (and many of the 20th) saw in Judaism the assertions that man is free, though morally obligated; that God represents moral law; that the messianic age is to be brought about by human effort. But they conveniently forgot the rabbinic assertions concerning the *yetzer ha-ra'* (the evil inclination), an inclination so strong that only God in the world-to-come can uproot it.

They forgot that God is represented not only as moral law (which may be understood in naturalistic terms), but also as love, forgiving to just and unjust alike (which cannot be so understood). They forgot that while on the one hand the Messiah is said to arrive when men repent—when the world has become good enough to make his coming *possible*—he is on the other hand said to come when the world will be so wicked as to make it *necessary*. They stressed the midrashim asserting Israel's election as the result of its free choice, but ignored those that saw it as a supernaturally imposed fate.

Our naturalists and rationalists thought to improve Judaism; they made it more "systematic" and "scientific." As becomes ever clearer today, they sucked the life out of it, and transformed profound insights of religious existence into platitudes.

ASSUMING that the medievalist interpretation of Judaism is unacceptable to modern man, the first task of a new theology is to understand Judaism as it actually was in terms truer and more adequate than the prejudices of liberal rationalism. We can here merely assert a general conclusion which we intend fully to corroborate elsewhere: *Judaism is to be understood, not as an evolution of ideas in the direction of a pure rationalism, but as confrontation of finite human existence with the infinite.* Jewish "ideas" are to be understood not in themselves (in their systematic-philosophic coherence), but as the reflection of this confrontation, in historic and personal existence. This accounts for the fact that the profoundest statements made on sin and freedom, reason and revelation, God's justice and mercy, this world and the world-to-come, are not scientific or systematic but (if I may use Existentialist terminology) *dialectical*, that is, they express profound and irreducible tensions, struggles, conflicts—and resolutions—arising in and from the basic relationship of finite to Infinite.

TRADITIONAL sources abound in such a dialectical vision. The tension in the rela-

tionship between finite man and Infinite God is made irreducible by its *immediacy* and its *mutuality*. In its *immediacy*, it differs sharply from the philosophic relationship to the first cause. "God is far—for is He not in the heaven of heavens?—and yet He is near. . . . For a man enters a synagogue, and stands behind a pillar, and prays in a whisper, and God hears his prayer. . . . He is as near to His creatures as the ear to the mouth." The infinite God, paradoxically, is yet everpresent to finite man.

That it is a *mutual* relation (in contrast with mysticism) is another vast paradox: the action of finite man cannot, and yet does, make a difference to the infinite God. "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and I am God." That is, when ye are My witnesses, I am God, and when ye are not My witnesses, I am, *as it were*, not God." Statements such as this reflect fully and consciously the two-way, mutually-dependent, dialectical character of the God-man relationship. It is reflected no less in the descriptions of the *nature* of God, especially of His qualities of justice and mercy. Insofar as man is free and responsible, God is absolutely just, "never passing beyond justice but once"; yet insofar as man is finite, God is absolutely merciful: "If we have merit, and if we possess good deeds, He gives us what is ours; if not, then He acts charitably . . . toward us from what is His." Absolute mercy and absolute justice are mutually exclusive; yet on the basis of either alone, the world (and the relationship between finite and infinite) is not possible: "If I create the world on the basis of mercy alone, its sins will be great; on the basis of justice alone, the world cannot exist. Hence I will create it on the basis of justice and mercy, and may it then stand."

In the rabbinic interpretation, man can only understand himself as both finite and yet transcending finitude. Insofar as he *ought* to combat the evil inclination (the *yetzer ha-ra'*), he *can* do so, especially with the help of the God-given "remedy" against the "disease"—the Torah. But while man can and must combat evil in degree, only God

can root it out in kind: "The Israelites say to God, 'Lord of the world, Thou knowest how hard is the strength of the evil inclination.' God says, 'Remove it a little in this world, and I will rid you of it altogether in the world to come.'" Again, insofar as the evil inclination is traceable to God it is potentially good and necessary for human life: yet it at the same time causes a contradiction in human life: "Woe to me from my Yotzer (Creator) if I follow my yetzer (evil inclination); and woe to me from my yetzer if I follow my Yotzer!"

The human situation involves a dialectical tension between a host of other notions which cannot even be mentioned here. Among them are the ethics of motive and the ethics of consequence, the relationship between the individual and the world, history and the trans-historical, this world and the world-to-come. To this last relationship R. Jacob refers in his profound statement in *Pirkei Avot*: "Better is one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than the whole life of the world-to-come; yet better is one hour of blissfulness of spirit in the world-to-come than the whole life of this world." L. Feuer, in his *Jewish Literature Since the Bible*, omits the last half of this statement. This is a nice illustration of the sort of modern "improvement" of classical Judaism which transforms religious profundity into moralistic platitudes.*

SUPPOSING our historical interpretation of Judaism to be correct, how does it lead to theology? We are confronted, to begin with, with an alternative: we may dissolve the "confrontation" we spoke of in terms of "experience," that is, interpret what was subjectively to Abraham and the rest of Jewish tradition a direct relationship to the absolute as a mere *feeling* whose objective correlate, the "outside," is denied or left in suspense. But then we escape the real question—the religious question—which is

* This writer feels keenly the inadequacy of this brief digression on the dialectical element in Jewish tradition. He hopes soon to place before the public a fully documented work on this subject.

not directed to "experience" but to "existence." "Existence" inescapably concerns *me*, and, being part of *me*, it at the same time resists complete rational penetration. It cannot be dissolved into a theoretical system, even if it is a system of "feeling" or "experience." That is to say, *I escape the question of religious living until I face the real choice: whether this "outside" is Nothing or Absolute Transcendence—the choice between nihilism and faith.* This choice cannot be left in "scientific" suspense—for my existence cannot be left in suspense: it must be *lived*.

As regards Jewish history (which we say is a confrontation between finite existence and the infinite), we can take three attitudes: we may consider it a psychological curiosity and ignore the religious question; we may call the "outside" the Nothing—in which case we deny the very basis of Jewish theology and break away from a tradition which lived by an erroneous assumption; or we may make the decision of faith, in which case we find a new (and, this writer believes, the only possible besides the classical) basis for Jewish theology.

LET us briefly indicate the feasibility of this basis in some crucial points:

(1) A religious existence differs from a religious idea in the following: an idea, once thought, becomes the permanent possession of mankind; but existence must always be lived anew. As we have said, anyone can subscribe to "ethical monotheism": but to live in direct relationship to God by virtue of faith (if there is such a thing—which depends on the decision of faith itself) is no less difficult because it has been done a thousand times before. While we may learn no "religious ideas" from Abraham, we may learn from him (probably we are not great enough to do this) religious *existence*. In other words, the existential approach provides the sole possibility (aside from the classic one) of finding a direct religious and theological guidance in Jewish tradition. And this in no way conflicts with what is really scientific

in the contribution of the historian of ideas. One may well use one's reason and yet turn to tradition and search for the ultimate possibilities of an existence lived in confrontation with the Absolute.

(2) Judaism is not alone in searching out the deepest strains of existence: we have no monopoly on profound living. Nor is Judaism alone in the decision that the "outside" is the Absolute rather than the Nothing: we have no monopoly on faith. But Judaism is alone in asserting that *its people*, for no other and better reason than that they are Jews, are forced by their destiny to live in that confrontation with the Absolute which, for others, is a matter of individual inclination or individual fate. Once we have shared the first decision with Judaism (the decision that the "outside" we must face is the Absolute), we are confronted with the question whether we shall share the second decision with Judaism as well: that Jewish history is to be understood as *a fate urging to faith*. Nothing in the science of history either compels us to make this decision or prevents us from making it. But one thing is clear: if we do not make this decision, and cannot accept the classical interpretation of Jewish existence, there is no theological basis for Judaism.

The approach here suggested would not only solve the perplexities noted above, but also solve the time-honored problem: "What is a Jew?" To tradition the answer was clear: *a Jew is a person who by reason of his descent is obligated to the divine covenant*, which obligation is not altered by the fact that he may reject it. It is modernism which is full of difficulties. Is Jewishness a matter of race? Then it includes him who is not even aware of his Jewish descent, and excludes the Jewish convert! Is it a matter of religious belief? Then it excludes the Jewish atheist!

The new interpretation resolves the problem in a manner not unlike the classical one: a Jew is anyone who by his descent is subject to Jewish fate ("the covenant"); whether he responds to Jewish fate with

Jewish faith (whether he is "obedient" or "stiff-necked") does not affect, though it is related to, his Jewishness.

Is it meaningless chance to be forced to this type of existence? Or is it meaningful destiny? To answer this last question affirmatively is a decision of faith. Only if we shed the banalities of a philistine optimism which is really a fear both of the tragic and the Absolute, and make this decision of faith in order to "prepare the world for the Kingdom of God"—only then has the time come for a reconstruction of Jewish faith and theology.

TO RETURN to Father Abraham—for at last I have regained him as father and guide. And I have regained him not without the help of Kierkegaard. To be sure, I will, as a Jew, subscribe to "ethical monotheism." But I am not so much concerned with the purity of Abraham's philosophic ideas: I am concerned with him as the awe-inspiring representative of an *existence* not essentially different from the existence in which all men live. This existence has fearful strains—which Abraham lived in an extreme form—and which we inevitably share. All of us today have in many things the alternative only between evils; and if "ethical monotheism" were all we had, we tremble to think of ourselves in eternal judgment. For we would have absolutely nothing with which to face up to the moral paradox that some of the evil we do or condone is both unavoidable and inexcusable.

Thus I revere Abraham who lived the human paradox to the extreme and yet had faith that it was not fatal. Perhaps it is because of his "merit" that we are spared his extreme tests? Be that as it may, Abraham waits for us, as the potential father of every Jew aspiring to be a good Jew: for he teaches us to live courageously the ethical under the moral law, in an existence which requires divine love superseding the ethical if it is to be healed of its tragic tensions. Hence we can confess with Kierkegaard: "No one is so great as Abraham! Who is capable of understanding him?"

TEL AVIV: MESSIAH IN A BUSINESS SUIT

Israel's New Leadership Emerges

JON KIMCHE

FOR more than eighteen centuries the Jews had believed that one day Messiah would come and lead them back into the Promised Land. But not the wildest of visionaries could have anticipated Messiah in a business suit arriving at the crowded Tel Aviv Museum in a bullet-proof Lincoln in the early afternoon of May 14, 1948. Inside the Museum it then took precisely seventeen minutes for David Ben Gurion to realize the prediction of scores of prophets and seers by proclaiming the State of Israel. The Land of Promise had become an accomplished fact. The formalities were concluded; the reality was about to begin.

Six months have gone by. Behind the battle lines that changed the face of the Middle East in forty hectic days, the building of a modern nation and state has been under way. From the very first moment a conflict broke out between those who wanted Israel to be a nation "like unto the nations" and those who wanted her to be something different, something new and without precedent, something worthy of "the people of the Book."

THE first half-year of Israel's national existence is already history—a history which, obscured by the more sensational news stories of war and diplomacy, has yet to be recorded. JON KIMCHE, who was in Israel during that first half-year, here outlines the developing pattern of the Israeli state, emphasizing the processes of political and social change which have been at work behind the headlines. Mr. Kimche is by now well known to COMMENTARY readers for his expert reportage on the Near East, which has appeared in previous issues of this magazine. (His most recent article was "Troubled Iraq: Keystone of the Middle East" in the July 1948 number.) Formerly managing editor of the London *Tribune*, he is now covering the Palestine situation for the Overseas News Agency. He was born in St. Gall, Switzerland, in 1909.

But the battle, along the whole front, has gone in favor of those who might be described as the "assimilationists." Israel is taking shape now according to a familiar pattern, and in passing over the road trodden by many new and aspiring nations before her. In the hour of its greatest emergency the country turned to the tried and tested methods that had carried the Allies to victory during the last war. The Israeli New Model Army and New Model State were abandoned. This is the real story of the founding of the new state, and of its teething troubles and problems.

THE Haganah was a formidable force—on paper—when the state was proclaimed. Its soldiers were tough, devoted to their cause, and intelligent beyond the normal run of soldiers. But it was sadly under-equipped and—it must be admitted—also considerably unprepared for the type of warfare that it had to face. It lacked everything: rifles, ammunition; it had no heavy machine guns and no idea of guns. Its armored cars were home-made and amateurish; its equipment was poor and inadequate. Even the number of men it put into the field initially was so few that there seems to be no rational explanation for the defeat of the first Arab attack when it came on May 15.

And indeed there is no rational explanation in customary military terms. The Arabs were not good fighters; they were badly led; but they had equipment, and they very often had courageous and daring soldiers who were prepared to die for their side. What stopped them then? It was, in those first days, the *different* Jews and not the "assimilationists." The soldiers who began fighting under the command of Israel Galilee, the tough farmer from Na'an who had never seen regular mili-

tary service, composed an army without ranks, officers, or any discipline other than their own iron self-discipline. They were students who had come to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem to study, and spent their last twelve months without interruption on the firing line. They were literally brothers in arms. They were settlers from the communal settlements. They were good shots. They never retreated. They were self-confident beyond measure. They held their Arab opponents in utter contempt on the basis of their experience in the field. But they operated only in small groups—rarely above platoon strength, had no experience in fighting in large formations, and lacked staff officers trained to handle large forces in action. Numbering altogether not more than a thousand men—boys would be more correct—this scattered, inadequately trained, and poorly equipped force saved Mishmar Ha-emek and the fertile plain from invasion by Kaukji's Liberation Army in April; it saved Jerusalem's Jewish city during its critical days; it stopped the Egyptian advance and it halted the Syrians when they were on the point of breaking into the rich cluster of Jewish settlements south of Lake Tiberias. But there is a limit even to idealism and courage; and the price in blood paid by this elite of the Jewish youth in Palestine was extravagant. Out of one hundred and thirty-odd students fighting in Jerusalem, over fifty have been killed in action and only five have escaped wounds. While this elite, at first almost alone, was holding off the Arab attack, the first clash between the New Model and the tried old methods appeared on the political surface.

Ben Gurion, Prime Minister and also Minister of Defense, was probably the first of the leaders to understand the vulnerabilities involved in the composition of Israel's population, and to face the consequences. He, like many others, had been a fervent supporter of the Haganah and particularly of its striking force, the Palmach. He and many others saw in this un-militarist, classless, intelligent, and ideological army, of which the Palmach was the prototype, the appropriate fighting

organization of the new Jew. But Ben Gurion was now no longer the fiery propagandist who conjured up exciting new ideas, but head of a nation in mortal peril. He had the reputation of being intolerant and doctrinaire, but he was the first to recognize the danger of over-idealizing the Jews of Israel. And Ben Gurion soon came to understand that the young Israelis who had first rushed to meet the Arab attack were not typical of the entire nation. The general run of Jews in Israel were, in fact, like the general run of any other people on the same level of civilization, and the sooner their leaders recognized this the better would they be able to lead them through the crisis.

HOWEVER the situation had become complicated. Israel was now a state and party politics and ideologies had begun to play a larger part. The youths who composed the Palmach and furnished its leaders were drawn, as already explained, mainly from the strongly socialist communal settlements of the Hashomer Hatzair and from the students at the University, who were also inclined to the Left. Furthermore, Hashomer Hatzair, which had been primarily a strongly idealistic socialist movement based on the communal life of the settlements, had changed its character. No longer a movement whose heart lay in idealist politics, and which was relatively unconcerned with direct power, it had now joined up with two other dissident labor groups that had broken away from Ben Gurion's Mapai, the official labor party, to form the Mapam. The Mapam now holds over a third of the votes in the General Confederation of Labor, has two ministers in the cabinet, and is, above all, the dominating element among both the rank and file and the leadership of the Palmach. The Mapam saw the new ideal of Jewish society in the organizational form of the Palmach and wanted this form extended to all the fighting units of Israel. Failing this, it wanted to maintain at least the strength and integrity of the Palmach as a separate organization with separate rules, its own command, and its own outlook self-discipline.

There was a brief crisis in the high command when Israel Galilee, commander of the Haganah and a member of Mapam, resigned and Ben Gurion became commander-in-chief. At first the army commanders sided with Galilee; then there was a compromise; and then the tide began running Ben Gurion's way. He became supreme commander in fact, and, far more important, he made his views felt in the reorganization of the army. This reorganization, more than any other event in those early months, set the tone for the new state. There was then a strong current of opinion in Israel that opposed the trimmings of militarism, was intoxicated with the image of a Jewish people's army, and hoped to see the armed forces of Israel shaped somewhat on the lines of the army that defended the Republic in the early days of the Spanish Civil War or of the Maquis and partisan armies during the recent war. But to those acquainted with the realities of modern warfare, this prospect was a little frightening.

BEN GURION killed that prospect—deliberately and firmly. There was a risk for a time, indeed for a considerable time, that in doing this he had also killed the early spirit of the Palmach. Actually, he did extinguish some of the Palmach's élan. But the fault did not rest with Ben Gurion as much as in the attitude of Israel's Jews. Voluntary recruiting did not bring enough recruits. The best would join up, the rest stayed at home. The Israelis, it was also discovered, were bad organizers, and the majority of them could not be trusted with self-discipline. The army had therefore to be re-created on the same basis as all other armies, and it had to be trained and equipped like other armies. It was a sad admission for many a Jewish leader, but the stakes were too high to go on putting faith in propaganda slogans.

Thus the war has decided the future development of the Jewish state. The New Model of which so many dreamed has proved unworkable in practice. The army of Israel was built on the pattern of Montgomery's Eighth Army, in which so many of the Is-

raeli officers and soldiers had served. Ranks were established, officers' messes opened. Differential pay emphasized the change. The military police were dressed on the exact pattern of the British, and the whole army marched and looked like the British—and somehow everybody liked it. The great majority of the population, one felt, wanted to be like other nations and not to make a point of being different as Jews. This, too, was one of the most significant features in the development of the new state.

The army, it must be emphasized at this stage, was the state and the nation. It was in the center and pointed the direction. The state followed suit and organized itself on traditional lines. It is perhaps symptomatic—one might say almost significant—that two of its outstanding civil servants, Aubrey Eban and Walter Eytan, are products of British "public" schools and Oxford University, and one of them had served in the British army. Eban has become Israel's representative at the United Nations, and Walter Eytan, as Director of the Foreign Office, has successfully organized Israel's foreign service. Eban's speeches have been excellent samples of classical English; and the Foreign Office, though it has dropped English for French as its diplomatic language, is closer to the British Foreign Office than to any other.

Yet the suggestion that Israel is aping the British would be indignantly rejected by the great majority of the army and the people. Any resemblance between Israeli and British forms, they will argue, is purely coincidental. If this is indeed true, then the implications of the development are all the more remarkable. For, whatever the deeper reason, the resemblance is there.

HOWEVER, while the armed forces have been organized and re-organized three or four times under the pressure of war and of Ben Gurion—and thus, after months of rather bitter and costly experience, have acquired an organization, equipment, and leadership that is more on Western than on Oriental or partisan lines—the government as a whole, the civil service, the press, and

the civilian public did not benefit equally from the pressure and tension of war. The civil sector proved less malleable and it tended to accept unduly the bureaucratic vices of government departments everywhere else, and to suffer from a civilian irresponsibility that was peculiar to Israel. One understands that the forms of government all had to be created out of nothing, overnight and in the face of war. However, while these reasons explain many of these shortcomings, they do not justify them nor warrant that they should be ignored and not corrected.

Many strange and, at times, upsetting things were discovered in the course of creating Israel's state apparatus. The Jews of Palestine had few good organizers. Many of the leading businessmen, soldiers, and politicians were muddlers when it came to organizing an office or a staff. There was, and still is, a desperate shortage of the kind of servants the new state needs most. The old guard that did yeoman service as Zionist Organization emissaries, as presidents of local Zionist groups, and collectors of funds and propagators of propaganda, were seen to have outgrown their usefulness. As in all revolutions, the old revolutionaries, the born rebels and propagandists, became a liability once their cause had triumphed. Many revered names had to be rewarded with sinecures out of harm's way. The tempo and mentality of the new state could be absorbed only in Palestine itself; the Zionists who came on their annual pilgrimages from abroad would have to be outsiders.

There was a new generation. The men who waged the war for Israel's independence had grown up in a time of persecution and war. Almost half the population of Palestine has no political memories dating back to before Hitler. It had grown up during a period when life was cruel and lives were cheap and the liberal humanities the objects of contempt and derision. The prizes went to the strong, the swift, and the cunning. All this has left an indelible impression on this younger generation of militants in Palestine, and on its leaders.

THE lessons learned have been applied in the army and the air force. Many of the old stalwarts of the Haganah days have been replaced in key positions by younger men, experts brought from abroad. And not by the civilian ministries. The army had the power to do it; did it; indeed, had to do it. Today the Israeli military leaders are mostly new men, unknown either to the public or the Zionist world.

Inevitably, on the other hand, many of the old guard found their way into one form or another of government service. The ministries were distributed to the parties, and by the parties to those who had greatest claim to high positions. In some cases merit went hand in hand with the title to a ministerial post—but not always. The Foreign Office under Shertok and his director-general has been from the first the best-run ministry. The Treasury, under the ablest direction of Eliezer Kaplan and David Horowitz, has become the most heavily burdened and overworked one. It was natural that the best men were appointed to the policy-making top posts, and that, after these had been filled and the army had drawn its share, there was a severe shortage of men capable of conducting the routine affairs of the ministries.

This showed itself in the growth of bureaucratic tendencies; in inefficiency and indecision; in delays; in unanswered correspondence. By the end of the summer the government had just over three thousand civil employees; the work at hand required at least ten thousand—not only for the affairs of the state but also to supervise an economy that had become almost entirely controlled as a consequence of the war. This shortage of manpower and ability led directly to the main failure of the government on the home front. It failed to control the galloping inflation of food prices and rents; it rationed essential foods but did not make sure that the ration was available and distributed; above all it failed to instill a consciousness in the public that black-market purchases were not only against the law but morally and socially wrong. The fault in this last respect lies with the whole outlook

of the great majority of Jews in Israel, but this outlook was also shaped by the simple fact that without some black-marketing you were left with very little to eat.

On the whole, the new state showed a remarkable capacity to improvise in an acute crisis, but also striking lack of foresight. Bureaucracy persisted astonishingly until the sheer force of circumstances forced it to give way. Too little was done while there was still time to arrange for adequate importation of essential foods; the provision of fuel oil and gasoline was left to the last minute; and, in many areas, the old, deadly optimism of the Jew who is always sure that God will help, piled immeasurable difficulties on the shoulders of the government and the people.

It is from this situation that spring all the great issues—and the men—who will be involved in the coming elections to the Constitutional Assembly.

THE sad truth is that Dr. Chaim Weizmann now belongs to the old guard that has been forgotten, ignored, and set aside by the new generation of Israel. But he is not the man to be a puppet president and he is bound to re-assert himself and his personality. Whether he will fit into the new Israel, or whether the two will jar each other's susceptibilities, time only will tell. That is the great difference between him and the Prime Minister of Israel, Ben Gurion.

For Ben Gurion is the personal embodiment of all that happened in these last months. He has contributed more than any other man in Israel to the creation of the state and its successful defense. He has acquired those attributes of leadership that made men like Churchill and Trotsky great war leaders while yet civilians. His faith in his cause has inspired him beyond his normal capacities and he has infused the same self-confidence and the same faith into his followers. He also has the faults that usually go with these qualities: he is impatient, particularly with fools, doubters, and critics, and tends to equate all three categories. On the other hand, like Churchill, his loyalty to old party

comrades is excessive, and this is why some dead wood has been retained in key positions.

But as the war progressed Ben Gurion himself changed. He grew with the victories of his armies and the consolidation of the state. In the early days, just before the British abandoned the Mandate, and just afterwards, when British troops were still in the Haifa enclave, he was obsessed by the opposition of the British in Palestine and of Bevin in London. He ceased to believe anything the British said, and he suspected anyone who had a good word or an explanation to offer for them. At the time it was often difficult to understand what lay behind Ben Gurion's fury. But in those early days of April and May, he knew perhaps better than anyone else how near the British did come to defeating the cause of the Jews.

It was natural that when Ben Gurion's powers grew and his confidence in the state was confirmed, and he was able from his high position to discern weaknesses and faults unseen by others—it was natural then that he tended to act by himself. There were few men at the helm in Israel prepared to make decisions without lengthy debates, and a state of indecision camouflaged as democracy still characterizes the working of the governmental and military machines. On a number of crucial occasions, when his colleagues were assailed by doubt and sought refuge in indecision, Ben Gurion forced immediate action upon them. Many important military and political decisions were taken under his pressure, among them that to attack the *Altalena* when the Irgun insisted on bringing her into port and unloading her, and the law to suppress all dissident military organizations and stamp out terrorism in Jewish political life. In both cases he was ahead of public opinion in the large cities and his colleagues hesitated, but yet he went ahead and gave the orders to act.

As commander-in-chief of the army as well as Prime Minister, Ben Gurion could act directly through army channels over which his ministerial colleagues had no very adequate control. And because they often hesitated when they ought to have acted,

he would act alternately in both capacities, as military or civil leader. He irritated the Mapam on the Left and the right-wing parties as well, and it is the sum total of their grievances that has become the big political issue in Israel today. Ben Gurion, together with the Labor party and the trade unions (the Histadrut), is charged with having established a de facto party dictatorship and having filled the government departments and key military and diplomatic posts with loyal members of Mapai.

It would be wrong to say that there is no fire behind all this smoke, or that Ben Gurion and the Mapai wholeheartedly invite men of ability from rival parties to fill positions for which they may be better fitted than some of the Mapai party members who now occupy them. Nevertheless, there have been enough exceptions to this rule to throw out the general accusation of a party dictatorship. What remains are only the more common failings of democracy: a preference for men who agree with the majority and the desire to reward friends rather than opponents.

MORE serious and pertinent is the charge that the state favors the great combines that have emerged as the subsidiaries of Mapai in industry and agriculture and which are gradually driving independent small enterprises out of business—unless they join the Histadrut or one of its auxiliaries. The industrial contractors of the Histadrut, Solel Boneh, have grown enormously and become influential and very rich. They get most of the government contracting jobs, and now, when draconic taxation has been clamped on the individual and on private business, Solel Boneh has been exempted from paying income tax because it is not a profit-making organization. The Histadrut's agricultural co-operative, Hamashbir, and dairying co-operative, Tnuva, have been given the same preferential treatment.

The government has a case for its action here. It is seeking to create a planned and organized economy and avoid the risk of having to depend on a chaotic mass of

unorganized enterprises in time of crisis. Behind this calculation is more than an ideological aim—although this plays its part too. There is the growing belief that Israel will have no real peace with her neighbors for perhaps many years; that she will have to remain on guard militarily and economically and will have to organize her whole existence accordingly. To this end, large state-controlled enterprises as the dominating factors in economic life are far more practical than struggling, competitive small enterprises.

To Ben Gurion's credit should be added his success in controlling the army, which has gained lately in status and prestige more than any other force in the state. The army was not, however, entirely single-minded and the possibility of a conflict inside itself and with the government was, if not great, at least always there. The general staff was almost wholly official Mapai in outlook, but the Palmach, commanded by and composed of a very high proportion of members of the United Workers party (Mapam), stood considerably to the left of Mapai. There was also the military arm of the Irgun Zvai Leumi operating as an independent and separate unit in Jerusalem, and furthermore the small independent formation of the Sternists. All proposals for a unified and disciplined army were taken by the lesser parties as an attempt by Ben Gurion's Mapai to exclude them from influence. Step by step, and only against constant opposition, did Ben Gurion succeed in removing the separate organizations. With the dissolution of the separate headquarters of the Palmach, the process was complete. The state was now in complete control of its armed forces. But there was more to it than this. The armed forces had developed a kind of outlook of their own. It was—fortunately for Israel—not the customary militarism of successful armies but it did encourage arbitrary and roughshod methods. Here again Ben Gurion was the key figure. He was able to act as brake—whenever he wanted to.

IT is this present state of affairs, together with a successful political and military

record in foreign affairs, that constitutes the basis on which Ben Gurion and the official labor party will be judged. The fact that it also has a program plays a comparatively little part in the judgment of the Israeli electors. It is the record and the men responsible for it that are on trial. And the two main opposition groups are being judged similarly: what kind of men would supplant the present leadership rather than what kind of program would replace present government policy, is the question the electorate will ask.

Mapai's strongest single challenger is the United Workers party or Mapam. It is made up of three separate groups, the old pioneering party, the Hashomer Hatzair, together with two dissident groups who broke from the official Labor party. At the last elections these three groups had gone to the polls separately and collected altogether about 25 per cent of the total vote. As a united party they have now become a strong minority inside the Histadrut, and have moved considerably leftward. In domestic policy its leaders are generally united and they concentrate their attack on the food shortage, high prices, and the ever widening scissors between wages and cost of living.

In international affairs Mapam's attitude is more complicated and somewhat ambiguous. Its leaders emphasize that they do not want Israel to join the Soviet bloc, but at the same time they wish to cut the links that will bind Israel to the West. They want neutrality without criticism of Russia, yet they indulge in strong condemnation of British and American imperialism as it affects the Middle East in particular. Just how Mapam would put such "neutrality" into effect once it won state power is difficult to fathom, but its desire not to become involved positively on the Russian side seems quite genuine.

Mapam's position is further complicated by the presence in its leadership of some extremely able but discordant and strong personalities. Most of its older leaders have risen from the ranks after years in the labor movement, or have worked their way up through the hard life of the communal set-

tlements, but one of its outstanding younger leaders is the redoubtable Dr. Moshe Sneh, who graduated into Mapam leadership straight from a position as executive representative of one of the right-wing parties. Sneh was commander of the Haganah until two years ago; he had played a great part in the life of Polish Jewry; he is a gifted orator and writer and he has ideas of his own about the ultimate aims of Mapam. However, he has not yet won the unqualified trust of Mapam's rank and file—like all other labor movements, they do not take altogether kindly to converts from the bourgeois ranks. While it has high ideals, and has produced many of the best soldiers and expressed genuine social grievance, Mapam lacks outstanding and accepted personalities on the order of those in Mapai. It will carry its supporters and probably win substantial support from the new immigrants, but it is still doubtful whether it will win over the so-called independent voter who nowadays seems so often to decide elections.

It is equally doubtful that the independent voter will, as a protest against the high cost of living or against the other home-front abuses, vote for the newly founded Freedom party, which is led by Mehaem Beigin, one-time commander of the Irgun.

BEIGIN has orientated his new party toward the middle class, and he is critical of the government's socialist legislation, attacking the controls it has imposed on industry and denouncing its high income tax. He also asks the whole of Palestine for the Jews. On the face of it, this is a popular selling line that answers the desires of a great many people who would not normally follow Beigin. Indeed, when he first started his party he seemed to have a chance of sweeping away all other rightist opposition to the government and embracing within his fold many of the moderates of the Center, as well. Beigin is a persuasive orator—for those who like his kind of oratory: long emotional speeches punctuated by almost hysterical shouting, laughing, and weeping. As a matter of fact, he goes down well with some sections of

the Israelis, who follow him with passionate admiration and loyalty. He has been accused of starting a latently fascist movement, although so far there is no precise evidence for this other than the fact that parties such as Beigin's are usually forced by the inexorable logic of their own premises to go further and further towards the demagogic Right.

This prospect as well as doubts as to the stability of many of his fellow-leaders in the Freedom party has caused many individuals to hesitate about going all the way with Beigin. They assent to his criticism of the government and share his desire for the conquest of all Palestine—but they would not be likely to trust him or his colleagues with the responsibility of office.

The only other major factor is the Mizrachi: cohesive, Orthodox, and somewhat to the right of Center in its politics. The Mizrachi will probably not move into the foreground until consideration of the draft constitution begins in the Constituent Assembly. Then indeed will a battle for the soul of Israel begin. So far the government has avoided raising any of the issues that would begin a dispute between religious and non-religious Israeli. It has not appointed a minister of education, nor has it as yet established a modified body of laws for the courts. It has taken no decisions about public transportation on Saturdays, but the evil day cannot be put off much longer. The draft constitution is an extraordinarily lib-

eral document, allowing no room for either religious or militarist misuse, and it will not please the Mizrachi. In its coming fight to establish religious control over the schools, the courts, and the code of civilian morals, Mizrachi will have a chance to reveal its real strength, but today it is no more than a minority influence, if a strong one.

The elections will not solve Israel's problems but they may illuminate and emphasize them. The new state has a hard task ahead. We have the precedent of these last six months: in the days when hopes were dim and help from outside very remote, the country never gave up. The few and the many stood the test. They did deeds that will be told in years to come as the Haggadah tells of the Exodus from Egypt. They flew in planes that were an insult to aerodynamics, and they won; they fought with rifles and revolvers that were a menace to themselves and their friends, and they stood fast.

The final hour is as a rule followed, alas, by less elevated moments. The war has to be paid for, problems solved, and the damage repaired. Israel has probably more problems to the square mile than any other country, old or new. They cannot be solved by optimistic propaganda—or by depressing self-psychoanalysis. The great thing to which the artisans of the new state can point, not that they have achieved perfection or eliminated all the worries that face the Jew, is that they have been able so far to do the impossible.

TWO ARTISTS AND THE HILLS OF JUDEA

The Tension between Modern and Archaic Judaism

HEINZ POLITZER

LEOPOLD KRAKAUER'S drawings and Mordecai Ardon-Bronstein's paintings have one thing in common: although both are conditioned by Palestine, they can hold their own in any metropolitan exhibition. Both create a pictorial world which, while peculiar to them, owes certain characteristics to the ground they walk on and the sky above them. Krakauer's world is the narrower of the two, confined to a small set of objects upon which the artist plays endless variations. Bronstein's world is more open, shaped by a great variety of influences, and aims at suasion and surprise. Yet his work also shows traits that could only have their origin in Palestine, even though the artist's creative energy goes far beyond the boundaries of the country.

In a certain sense it is easier to formulate the problem of modern art in Palestine

HEINZ POLITZER was born in Vienna in 1910 and lived in Vienna and Prague as a free-lance writer until the time of the Anschluss. In 1938 he emigrated to Palestine, where he lived for nine years. He now teaches at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. Dr. Politzer was co-editor with Max Brod of the first five volumes of Franz Kafka's collected works, and in 1937 he published a book of poetry, *Fenster vor dem Firmament* ("Window on the Firmament"). Readers of this magazine will recall his articles "The World of Saul Steinberg" in the October 1947 COMMENTARY and "Habimah in New York" in the July 1948 issue. The painter Mordecai Ardon-Bronstein, whose work is discussed in the present article, was born in Tuchov, Poland, in 1896. He went to Palestine in 1933. He is now director of the New Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts in Jerusalem. An exhibition of his work was presented at the Jewish Museum in New York City from January 22 to March 3. Leopold Krakauer, the other artist discussed, was born in Vienna in 1890 and emigrated to Palestine in 1925. The translation of this article is by Francis C. Golfing.

than it would be in a strongly traditional community. The structure of society, as yet uncrystallized, and, time and again, shaken by violence, as well as the novel and still unstable economic structure of the country, are unable to support enough cultural achievements to satisfy the widespread enthusiasm for art. Even the usual stimulus furnished to artists by the recalcitrance of the middle classes is absent. The urban population of Palestine is still too checkered and fortuitous, the communal settlements are too completely engrossed in experiment and progress, to form the kind of compact whole that might oppose the artist and shape him, let alone assist him. The extreme youth of the experiment (the organization of modern Palestine is barely twenty-five years old) makes impossible that homogeneity of attitudes that is the condition of a national culture.

Besides the museums in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and the art school "New Bezalel" (under the direction of Ardon-Bronstein), Palestine does contain, however, a number of private galleries, and has, in its press, here and there even the beginnings of a truly critical attitude.

But despite the handicaps enumerated above, the pictorial arts, especially painting, foreshadow a possible future efflorescence of culture in Palestine.

Hebrew literature is too much burdened with tradition, too massive and impersonal, to permit our contemporaries to live up to its time-honored patterns. It has only recently entered upon its receptive stage by beginning to assimilate, on a larger scale, the major works of world literature.

Music, the pet of Palestine culture, is by its nature too volatile to take the imprint of a national style. There have been attempts

to collect Oriental folklore and transcribe it in modern notation, and even, following the example of certain modern French and Spanish composers, to work toward the creation of a musical style uniting the countries of the Mediterranean. But as yet these are all experiments, attractive but imperfect. Obviously art cannot be created overnight like a derrick, a settlement, a city. Neither the will to create nor enthusiastic response is enough to bring forth the miracle of artistic creation. Time is to culture what light and rain are to the growing plant.

The creative artist in Palestine faces a dilemma that, in this newly colonized country, becomes a paradigm of the plight of the artist everywhere. Social problems assume a greater urgency here than elsewhere; the artist is surrounded by experiments involving the creation of a new community and these must work powerfully on his imagination.

The struggle for new economic and social forms that arose in connection with the communal settlements has left no individual's life untouched. When the artist turns from the common struggle back to his own work he feels isolated—though in a sense quite different from that of the artist in a metropolitan civilization, who either addresses a large public or else tries to make himself understood to a select group. The artist in Palestine is lonely, lonely as its desert-encircled landscape. This country, a true labyrinth of opposites, carrying the double burden of its past and its momentous present, does not easily open itself to the artist. Only by meeting it on the ground of its solitude is he able to seize it. For the country itself is lonely, cruel, and creative in its loneliness.

In place of simple encouragement or rigid opposition, Palestine offers its artists a dialectical tension.

LEOPOLD KRAKAUER solves the dilemma by giving the community and his work each its own. He is an architect by profession. Born in Vienna, he came to Palestine some twenty years ago. He has designed farm set-

tlements, dining rooms for the *Emek*, and built houses throughout the country that are striking in their structure, in the pliancy with which they adapt themselves to the countryside, and in the persuasiveness of individual solutions within the total construction. But in his drawings Krakauer appears totally withdrawn from the world, a stubborn visionary and mystic. His subjects are bare hills, the wind blowing through desolate scrub, the strange Asiatic moon above a sadly transfigured landscape, and, of late, thistles.

His media are charcoal and red crayon on light, and chalk on dark grounds. He presents a wealth of detail and, like Bronstein, does justice to the character of the landscape by extending the ridges of the hills to the top of the picture space, with the sky barely intimated. This gives an effect of gloom, constriction, anxiety, emptiness, and melancholy. Paradoxically this effect is increased by the plethora of detail, and at times the effect is actually created by it.

I have spoken of the landscape of Palestine, but really it is the hills of Judea that have worked their spell on both Krakauer and Bronstein. These hills that furnish the setting for Jerusalem, this city of blood and salvation, have only one parallel that I can recall in the history of art, El Greco's "Toledo in a Thunderstorm." On the other hand, an artist depicting the northern part of the country, wide-spaced Galilee (Asia's echo of Greece), will find it easy to make contact with European pictorial methods. His pictures will gain in effectiveness what they lose in originality.

Krakauer's paintings are desert and moon landscapes. Gullies gape like craters. Hills arch like the products of a gigantic, cruelly playful fantasy. Roads and lanes lead from nowhere to nowhere, ribbons of ghostly light weave through sinisterly illuminated landscapes. Houses are like lonely boulders, erratic relics of primordial times.

Krakauer's beggars are the products of this world and part of it. Like many of Blake's figures they are at once wretched and majestic. Their features are drawn from life

and remind us of the bearded figures crouched in the lanes and doorways of the Oriental quarter of Jerusalem. But Krakauer's hand manages to integrate his realistic detail in a visionary whole. The heads of patriarchs and prophets surmount weathered bodies wrapped in stormy draperies. The eyes are closed or blind, but a smile hovers on the lips, expressing the victory of ecstasy over suffering. Now and then, from among these tortured, glorious faces, the countenance of Jesus shines forth, a Jewish face crowned with thorns.

The faces of these beggars are landscapes of suffering, Palestinian landscapes. They are often juxtaposed to the trunks of olive trees, and they are of the same nature as the rotten, phosphorescent wood. They seem to have stepped forth from the wood and remain curiously at one with it. They are carved out of the roots, their faces engraved in olive bark by the burn of a merciless noonday light or the chisel of the tempest. Their silent faces are creations of human suffering. Eventually the identification becomes complete: the man becomes a tree, or the tree lifts its branches and cries.

The muteness of these figures corresponds to the silence that broods over Krakauer's landscapes. They are entirely self-enclosed, unable to communicate, weather-beaten monuments of dereliction. Yet we sense in their static gestures, their impersonal features, a longing to speak. Krakauer's beggars and landscapes are symbols of a soul that, in its dumbness and despair, craves communication and redemption. Yet both are anterior to the Word that was in the beginning. They are evidence of a pre-biblical, mythical humanity.

Krakauer's principal theme is the loneliness of an unredeemed world. With each new motif he has laid bare a deeper stratum of his loneliness. Thistles are his latest motif. Admittedly, he began drawing them when, after the comparatively relaxed atmosphere of the last few years of the war, Jerusalem relapsed into the stony silence of its history.

These thistles are the final development of the tree and beggar themes. They are

pure representations of elemental suffering in plant form. Krakauer does not proceed anthropomorphically; he faithfully preserves the organic structure of the thistle. He neither distorts nor symbolizes, and yet we see the shape of the plant body develop into beseeching hands, intersecting claws, filigree weapons, faces torn with pain. Sometimes these broken thistle stalks frame a landscape, sometimes like fantastic night birds they dangle a mask over it. But these are attempts at interpretation the spectator can easily dispense with. Unlike the beggars and trees, the thistles have a certain feminine touch, they are lighter notwithstanding their sharpness, and more communicative despite their profound silence.

KRAKAUER has learned a good deal from the graphic art of the Far East. In his thistle drawings the verve of his line gives life to the empty sheet. To bring emptiness to life is the same as to make silence speak. The free space—and there is much free space in these drawings—becomes vibrant through the action of the line. It tells of a pain being eased, a sadness relaxing from rigor. Some of these thistle heads are like the head of a grieving woman at the moment when tears start to her eyes. In spite of the sharp, merciless way in which these plants have been rendered, we feel that this grief, condemned to desperate dumbness, has approached the borders of communication.

Hoelderlin wrote: *Wo aber Gefahr ist, waechst das Rettende auch.* . . . (Wherever danger is, salvation is growing.) So Krakauer, in these thistle figures, seems to have reached the very dregs of grief, in which, unknown to himself, solution and recovery are preparing.

Alongside the dark and solemn realm of his visions, Krakauer has created another world where his imagination plays with gaiety and ease. This phenomenon is by no means unusual: visionary artists, even more than others, are apt to divert their surplus energies into the fields of whimsy and nonsense. It is only one step from the monumental to the bizarre, and a muted plaint is

often the center around which true humor weaves its grotesque threads. So we must interpret the cat poems of T. S. Eliot and the nonsense rhymes of Lewis Carroll and of the German philosophic poet Christian Morgenstern. Thus Leopold Krakauer sets beside his large drawings small, brightly colored sketches designed for children, his daughter in particular, which in their nimble fancy form the true complement of his slowly laboring imagination. These sketches depict animals, fabulous creatures, or a bearded angel with a flag growing out of his forehead, or a "relic of antiquity," the facade of a homesick Greek temple. They are playful drawings, full of laughter; they laugh at themselves and at the grief of their creator. Here the mute draughtsman becomes suddenly vocal, expressing himself in the nonsensical words of legend, in captions that really say only that "The ineffable is ineffable" (Kafka). Even when he communicates, it is only his silence, the ineffable, that speaks.

The artist, who looks like an old peasant and whose habits of living, thinking, and speaking still betray his Viennese origin, partakes in his dreams and visions of the mythical depths of Judaism. Like the poetess Else Lasker-Schüler, who admired his art, Leopold Krakauer is a Jew in search of redemption. His drawings are the strange images of this search. Novel and timeless, they are symbols of Palestine, creations of a great art that craves general recognition.

M. ARDON-BRONSTEIN's world has been created by a temperament in which the upheavals of our time blend with the afflatus of European art. This temperament is in a somber and defiant key, attesting, as it were, to the melancholy of all humanity. Bronstein started out as a revolutionary, but his mature work has fought through to a knowledge of the problems of contemporary man, especially of the artist.

He was born at the end of the last century in Tuchov, Poland. His dual character is already intimated in his origin. His family, which hailed originally from Russia, has

numbered among its members both Hasidim and Mitnagdim, seekers for a new piety and their opponents, mystics and rationalists. His father, a watchmaker by trade, through the probity of his craft became an exemplar for his son, whose temperament was wayward and extravagant.

The First World War brought the boy to Berlin. His talent, recognized early, was of the sort that invites encouragement. It was novel, yet not fundamentally aggressive; it met the attention of the spectator half-way, without irritating the quiet gaze of the sensible. Few examples of Bronstein's early work have been preserved: the tide of Nazism has swept away and buried them.

Yet the few examples that remain foreshadow the character of Bronstein's later achievement: a fancy that, without eliminating the elements of reality, changes them playfully into new configurations. These paintings show clear definition in the representation of the main subject, together with a tendency to let the background fade out, rather than to set it sharply against the central shape. They also betray a predilection for detail that, however, does not destroy the pictorial unity but always leads back to the main composition.

Bronstein was influenced in his early years by the Expressionist Artur Segal, and by the instruction he received at the Bauhaus in Dessau, probably the most progressive art academy in pre-Hitler Germany. Thus the young painter was turned in the direction of a determined modernism. But already in his youthful work his characteristic mode of vision asserted itself: a search for mediation, for a middle way, and a consciousness of the whole problem involved.

Bronstein came to Palestine in 1933. He gave up painting altogether for about a year. The light, the vastness and density of the landscape dazzled him, filling him with awe, almost with fear. In this awe he experienced all that a modern man can experience of the reality of the Biblical world. He assimilated Jewish antiquity neither consciously nor scientifically. But behind the sheer light the figures of the patriarchs, prophets, and kings

grew clearer even as they seemed to fade. Bronstein had rarely chosen Old Testament figures as subjects for his paintings, and whenever he had done so an element of questionable traditionalism had entered the painting. But when he took up the brush again, his vision clear at last, he managed to impart a feeling of antiquity to the landscape. The hills of Judea he painted are instinct with the past.

In order to achieve this, he has had to adapt that side of his nature which had been committed to analysis, surprise effects, and detail to a reality that can only be shown in its integral completeness. To do justice to this reality, he had to develop a sense of connection and discard playfulness, or at least recognize it and portray it as an impulse. He had to find a new soil of actuality for his modernism, which his German training had directed toward the abstract. Behind this actuality the transcendental, primordial, legendary loomed in its original grandeur and clamored for expression. What Bronstein received from Palestine was cultivation in its deepest sense.

Bronstein looked at the landscape with the eyes of a painter; he learned to prepare his palette in a new way. He chose colors that suited his temperament, and he found those colors in Jerusalem and the hills that surround it: a tremulous, oscillating white (the white of the desert); a red that is sometimes crimson, sometimes the color of dried blood; a nocturnal blue, transparent in the moonlight or menacing with the power of darkness, shading into a brown or green impasto. In Jerusalem, Bronstein found that fragment of nature which he was best fitted to render in absolute purity. His finest mountain landscape is a night piece in which the strata rise one above the other to a narrow strip of firmament. The total impression of this painting is that of a primordial carapace distorted to monstrous proportions by strange light reflections. Even where he dwells on the loveliness of the landscape, as in his painting of an Arab village, "Ain-Karim after the Rains," the monumental character of the landscape

comes through. A night view from a window, daylight scenes, a roof, a tree, a road—through all these presences the past rises, however attenuated, and addresses its promise or its warning to the spectator.

BRONSTEIN has, to my knowledge, painted only one marine picture—during the last war. It was called forth by his compassion for the Jewish refugees aboard the "Struma" who perished in the sea after being turned away from the shores of Palestine. Dark sheets of water rise toward a jagged sky, green and black shadows moving upward to a blue mottled with black. The artist's fundamental experience has been transposed into a seascape as muted as the Biblical landscape. The tragic occasion is omitted, the ship and its foundering are invisible. Only the element, the sea, is rendered. The upward movement of the torn masses of water gives an inescapable feeling of engulfment.

This painting is noteworthy for the transposition effected in it, for its silence in regard to its psychological motivation. Thus what might have been an historical document has become a work of art. Bronstein has used the method of the lyrical poem, perhaps of all true creation: that which is judiciously omitted speaks the loudest.

Bronstein's still lifes are likewise transpositions. He has left behind the objective method of Cézanne. These still lifes communicate personal occasions, their color values correspond to the moods from which they originated. They are embodiments of the artist's ego rather than renderings of reality. In Bronstein's portraits the accidental and atmospheric elements are also more important than the objective figuration. The model rises from the background, at once a physical presence and a mystical apparition. Rembrandt's shadow falls on these paintings.

Unlike Krakauer's art (almost devoid of figures and expressive of alienation from mankind), Bronstein's paintings are predominantly human in their awareness of the psychological problems of modern artists. But his self-portraits show none of the escapist tendencies of the young Picasso.

When Picasso painted his Pierrots he indicated the masquerade as a way out of his personal impasse; but Bronstein's self-portraits show him standing before his easel, brush in hand. The reality of his vocation and of his artistic act are fully preserved. But the face is empty, the mask of a clown; the eye sockets are blank, and there is a grin of despair around the mouth. This painting is the confession of the analytical mind, of the "mirror man" who is able to look in his own face and admit its mask-like character. In contrast to the method of transposition used in the "Struma" painting, the psychological motive is fully expressed here. Evidently the occasion was too urgent, the impulsion to get it down too immediate.

AN ARTIST capable of such painting will necessarily entertain an ambivalent attitude toward both the content and the forms of religion. Bronstein is in contact with religion no less through his Eastern European origin than through his encounter with the Palestinian landscape, which moves man to either defiance or submission, but forms him in either case. But he is removed from religion by character, intellect, and training, as is shown in such pictures as the self-portrait. This very ability to render this ambivalence dialectically makes Bronstein the representative painter he is.

Only recently Bronstein chose again a religious subject for a painting. "Sarah" is a giant woman in purple and blue bent over a corpse in ghastly pale colours. All her grief seems concentrated in her savage gesture, her face is veiled and made invisible by her

mourning. Bronstein had in mind the Akeidah, the sacrificing of Isaac, when he started working on this canvas. But again a transposition took place. While he painted the figure of the father, it changed into that of a mother, who in turn became a symbol and monument to the tragedy of the mothers of Guernica and Auschwitz. The *Zeitgeist* had entered the biblical conception.

The central figure of the sacrificing father has been transformed into that of a grieving mother, the religious act into an expression of universal suffering. The artist has seized the Biblical motif and identified himself with the tradition from which his subject was chosen. The choice of subject was not fortuitous. An ardent reader of Kierkegaard's philosophy, he is aware of the problematic character of the sacrifice of the son, as expounded in *Fear and Trembling*. But in the moment of creation something else intervened: the obscure powers of the imagination, childhood reminiscences, ancestral memories that had lain dormant in his blood, stirred and came to life. Suddenly, almost inadvertently, a new and wholly personal conception of the Biblical motif made its appearance and Sarah stepped forward with her lifted arms.

THIS tension between modern and archaic Judaism constitutes the fundamental force beneath the everyday reality of Palestine. This country, an example of historical dialectics in its deepest sense, has found in M. Ardon-Bronstein its painter. He represents it to the world, at once mysterious and revealing.

BRITAIN'S THIRD EMPIRE

The Southward Course to Africa

GEORGE LICHTHEIM

WHAT should be the place of the British colonial empire in a planned socialist economy? This question—how to unite two such dissonant terms as “empire” and “socialism”—has naturally intrigued British political observers and theorists. Even before the formation of the five-power nucleus in Western Europe (the Brussels Pact) it had been projected into the arena of current events by Mr. Bevin's speech of January 22, 1948, in which, after advocating a Western European Union, he dealt in straightforward terms with the new role that was to be played by tropical Africa and Malaya.

“We turn our eyes,” said the Foreign Secretary, “to Africa, where great responsibilities are shared by us with South Africa, France, Belgium, and Portugal, and equally to all overseas territories, especially of Southeast Asia, with which the Dutch are closely concerned. The organization of Western Europe must be economically supported. That involves the closest possible cooperation with the Commonwealth and with over-

THE Labor government of England, coming to power in a world of naked international rivalry, has had to face the difficult and bitter problem of being at once a Socialist government and the administrator of an empire. On that government's success in solving this apparent contradiction, depends not only the economic future of Britain herself, but also to a large extent the emergence of an integrated Western European system. In this article, GEORGE LICHTHEIM, who wrote “England: The Citizen on Trial” in the January COMMENTARY, analyzes British plans for the development of a “third empire” in Africa, in terms of Britain's socialist program and the overall problems of international rivalry. Mr. Lichtheim is London correspondent for two Palestinian dailies, the English language *Palestine Post*, and the Hebrew *Davar*, and a contributor to various British periodicals.

seas territories, not only British, but French, Dutch, Belgian, and Portuguese.”

Neither the Conservatives nor the Socialist left-wing (with the inevitable exception of the fellow-travelers) found much to criticize in this suggestion, though some Conservatives disliked the idea of “planning an empire” and some Socialists were not too happy at being associated with France and Holland, currently in armed conflict with their colonial subjects. The little band of free-trade Liberals could hardly support so blatant an argument in favor of economic regionalism, but their criticism carries little weight in present-day Britain. As an attempt to educate the Labor party in its new imperial responsibilities—and to claim for it some credit for maintaining Britain's traditional great power role—the speech was undoubtedly a success.

THE idea behind the speech is an old one, and it was not the first time that Mr. Bevin had tried to popularize it. As far back as 1930 he surprised his trade-union colleagues by making a speech (recently circulated to all members of the Foreign Office staff as a reminder of their chief's prescience) demanding a “world federation” for the purpose of “creating an easy access to the raw materials of this planet.” On closer inspection, the “world federation” turned out to be a characteristically Bevinian rhetorical device that obscured a quite specific aim.

This was made plain when, after a brief but pregnant reference to the “imperial” possessions of America and Russia (“Empires are not limited to the British Empire”), he sketched the role that a remodeled British Empire, no longer anarchically exploited by the City of London but scien-

tifically planned and organized, would play within the "world federation": "When we find that one country has oil, another nation cotton, and another nation rubber, it is not a case of armies or navies settling the business. But we shall say to the others: Here are the resources at our disposal—resources which will be open to you, there being no restriction of raw materials for your needs. But in return there must be no restriction of supplies imposed on us, so that we too may have the raw materials that we need, without the fighting and financial struggle that has gone on hitherto."

Despite the crude language and the vagueness of thought—why precisely should barter on an inter-continental scale lead to anything but inter-continental rivalry?—this *Grossraum* idea was imaginative. So much so that the Conservative governments of the 1930's would have none of it. In the economic circumstances of the period, with the balance of trade moving in Britain's favor and the home market booming despite mass unemployment, it was more profitable to invest capital in consumer industries or in housing than to develop the backward parts of the empire. Hence the "National Government," under Neville Chamberlain and Sir John Simon—largely composed of, or influenced by, right-wing Liberals with banking connections and a healthy distrust of "planning"—refused to look at it, though a handful of Conservatives like L. S. Amery and Lord Beaverbrook anxiously pressed for an active imperial policy. Neither were the Socialists enthusiastic about an idea which seemed to violate all their traditional libertarian notions.

It was the chronic food shortage brought on by the war, and the threat of a permanent dollar famine, which converted both parties to the principle of stimulating the development of the colonies, at the expense, if need be, of the British home market. The British working-class housewife, a close judge of such matters, can see the value of the colonies if the subject is discussed in terms of more fats from ground-nuts to be grown on vast mechanized farms in East

Africa. This widely publicized scheme, however, is only part of a much broader plan for providing the British Empire with a new lease on life and a new economic basis—in Africa.

THE term "third empire," which is often employed to denote the British Empire of the post-1945 era, can have two meanings. Chronologically, the African empire is "third" in succession to the colonial empire in the New World lost in the 18th century by the Tories, and to the 19th-century Indian empire abandoned in our own day by the Labor government. But it is "third" also when considered against the background of the "Commonwealth" (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa) of self-governing "Dominions" (in actual fact independent nations), and the Moslem protectorates in the Middle East which are not formally part of the British Empire at all. It is "third" in this sense because it is last in significance, and it is last because it is the poorest and least developed.

There is a vague notion current that Africa is phenomenally rich. Nothing could be further from the truth. Africa has for thousands of years suffered from the effects of soil erosion, human malnutrition, and the tse-tse fly; it has the world's worst climate (literally) and its labor force is the least productive on the planet. Its potential riches in raw materials are considerable, but with the exception of the South African gold mines they are almost totally undeveloped. There is copper and chrome in Rhodesia, and the coal deposits in the same region are said to contain limitless quantities of coal of very high thermal power. There is also plenty of water power in East Africa which can form the base of hydroelectric developments, but almost nothing has been done to get them started. Finally, the whole area is short of labor and almost totally devoid of native technicians. Not only capital but skilled labor has to be imported from Europe—at a price. Political fragmentation, resulting from the colonial scramble of the late 19th century, completes the picture.

Still, Africa south of the Sahara is mainly British-controlled. The exceptions are the Belgian, French, and Portuguese possessions. Given some semblance of European union, the problem of political harmony should not be too formidable, though it will take time before the agents of the powers on the spot learn that their job is no longer to intrigue against each other. Africa is the obvious economic complement of Western Europe—the Germans realized this in the 1930's and built their plans upon it—and the hinterland of any future war in which Western Europe may be involved: the French General Staff is reported to be working on the assumption that French North Africa is to be the main base of the French Army in any future conflict. Now, since European union means primarily Anglo-French union, and since Britain and France are the paramount powers in Africa, politics and economics dovetail very neatly—or would, if Britain's economic problem were not of a rather peculiar sort. That problem can be summed up in one word: capital shortage. And capital is what Africa needs most.

The problem is not insoluble, provided Britain is temporarily relieved of the necessity of exporting almost everything not absolutely needed at home in order to pay for American imports. In other words—without Marshall Plan aid, no African development. British industry, frantically trying to re-equip itself, is starved for capital, and the job of industrializing the African continent is far beyond its resources. Private capital is more likely to flow into areas which have already been developed (there was a considerable outflow of "funk money" last year, largely to South Africa, which does *not* need more capital) and where returns are quick and high. But Britain needs the additional food and raw materials that Africa can undoubtedly produce, and the surplus investments that can be made in these years of crisis must be made where they do the most good. This is why government has been compelled to step in. Tropical Africa for many years cannot yield high profits, and only the taxpayer can foot the bill.

WHETHER this process is described as socialism or as state capitalism is a matter of political taste. Socialists may draw comfort from the fact that in this field at any rate private enterprise has been found unequal to the task (partly because of two world wars, which have eaten into Britain's wealth). Conservatives have already noted that in this age of super-empires, regional blocs, and economic planning, the old policy of letting the colonies pay for their industrialization out of local tax resources no longer provides an answer. British colonial policy until quite recently was in fact Victorian in two ways: it assumed that it was wasteful (if not downright immoral) for the home government to advance money to the colonies; and it envisaged the latter's eventual independence after passing through a period of uncontrolled development, financed by private investors—by no means all of them British. On all these points a complete change of view has taken place.

The new policy—inaugurated during the war by the Conservatives, but now carried forward with greater energy by Labor—stresses three factors: intensive capital investment at the British taxpayer's expense, in a quantity far in excess of anything the colonies could provide; the rapid expansion of colonial food and raw materials production; and the integration of the colonies—i. e. the tropical dependencies of Britain, chiefly in Africa—into the economic system of the Empire and/or the projected European Union.

With the Conservatives, emphasis of course is on the empire, with the Socialists it is on the European Union. From the point of view of the colonies it makes no great difference. What matters is that they are not expected to evolve into independent nation states trading freely with the rest of the world: the "third empire," like the first, has a mercantilist complexion. It is to be a "planned" (and closed) adjunct to the mother country. Indeed, non-interference on the part of the United States is an integral part of the scheme, since, given free choice, the colonies may seek access to the

American capital market. The point is succinctly made in a recent Colonial Office publication:

"Although the United States has not yet fully developed the technique of foreign investment which the United Kingdom has practised so successfully for so long, it is quite possible that individuals or institutions in the United States might be prepared to put up a good deal of capital for colonial development. But that capital would not be as welcome to the Colonial Empire as capital from British sources, since the return upon it would have to be made in US dollars, and if the return was at all large the result might be that the colonial territories as a whole would be added to the already long list of countries which are in dollar deficit."

ON THE financial side, at least, the new policy has got off to an impressive start. Under the Overseas Resources Development Bill of 1947, a Colonial Development Corporation and an Overseas Food Corporation are set up and receive the authority to raise loans aggregating 165 million pounds. (At the official rate, one pound equals approximately four dollars.) This compares favorably with the one million allotted to colonial development in 1929, when a timid start was made, or even with the annual outlay of five million for a period of ten years envisaged in 1940.

The practical results so far are less impressive: at least one enterprise—ground-nut cultivation in East Africa—is badly behind schedule and promises to be a good deal more expensive than was thought. This particular scheme is under the Food Ministry, not the Colonial Office. The paternalism of the latter had hitherto cushioned the Africans against the more violent impact of the Industrial Revolution, and the natives are already giving signs of distrusting the Food Ministry's intentions. Their suspicions have not been allayed by some candid talk from the Minister, Mr. John Strachey, the well-known author of *The Coming Struggle for Power* and other Marxist best-sellers of the 1930's. According to Mr. Strachey—no

longer the rising hope of the Communist Party but a *Realpolitiker* of no mean standing—"our national position is too grave to warrant any indulgence in our particular opinions on the methods of overseas development. . . . By one means or another, by hook or by crook, the development of primary production of all sorts in the colonial areas and dependent parts of the Commonwealth . . . is . . . a life and death matter for the economy of this country."

The *Daily Worker* (February 9, 1948) commented unfavorably on the speech: "At least that strips away the hypocritical pretence that such development is being carried out in the interests of the colonial people." The comment is demagogic nonsense, for the colonies can only benefit from intensive capital investment, whatever the purpose behind it. But Mr. Strachey has undoubtedly handed the Communists, and the African nationalists, a talking-point. (This writer has been present at Fabian Colonial Bureau meetings in London at which African students voiced violent indignation.)

Two aspects of the plan deserve special notice: the actual development schemes, though in part government financed, are to be undertaken by private enterprise (even the East African ground-nuts scheme has been handed over to the United Africa Company); and secondly, there are no African representatives on the boards of the two giant state-supervised corporations already mentioned. African nationalist sentiment is likely to crystallize around these aspects of the plan.

But for the moment opposition is weak. There is as yet hardly anything that could be called an African bourgeoisie. In East Africa, its place is largely taken by Indians and Syrians (another African grievance). In the West, where development is slower anyhow because of the climate, there are no white settlers on the land to exacerbate the African sense of oppression. Thus, despite a certain amount of official agitation over a supposed Communist "plot" on the Gold Coast—the recent scene of bloody riots—the political stage is still almost empty. The

present unrest in West Africa stems from the return of demobilized soldiers who for the first time in their lives were given enough to eat while in the army, and are now discontented with their lot.

Africa is still a land of abysmal poverty (and soil erosion). Food production, both for its inhabitants and for export, is a prime necessity, and whoever undertakes it can count on solid local support, at any rate from moderate elements. The African laborer can only be the gainer, especially if the color bar is not made an excuse for barring him from all but the least skilled jobs. Thus the new policy must be rated "progressive." There is nothing specifically Socialist about it, however, and it is certain that any Conservative government in Britain will continue it.

IT MAY be useful to cast a glance at another aspect of the new policy of concentrating all of Britain's available resources on Africa. Ever since the end of World War II, an influential section of official opinion has argued in favor of shifting the Empire's strategic center of gravity from the Mediterranean to the Dark Continent. Talk of a "Greater Somaliland" controlled by Britain, the tendency to block Abyssinian claims to Eritrea (British spokesmen are very vocal on the subject of Abyssinian misrule when this claim is brought up), the building up of army supply depots in Kenya, the concentration of the former Palestine garrison in Libya, and the tightening of British control over the Sudan, are all pointers in the same direction. Mr. Bevin is fond of talking about a "power line" running across the Middle East to Malaya and Australia, but in actual fact it is the north-south direction that is beginning to fascinate the military planners. In the event of war, the Mediterranean is likely to be temporarily "walled up," as General Eisenhower recently put it; but Britain can still hold Africa, and keep the route to the Far East open by using Cape Town as the main point on the line.

By contrast, the Middle East seems both

politically and militarily less safe, and in any case it is now largely an American responsibility. It is true that the British Empire, in regard to *influence*, is becoming co-extensive with Islam; so much so that one is tempted to describe it as an Anglo-Moslem Empire, or, in Toynbeeian terms, as the Islamic Society with the Union Jack superimposed upon the Koran. But *territorially* the "third empire" is African or it is nothing. It is only in Africa that Britain still has full control, for her Far Eastern possessions are strategically dependent on American domination of Japan and American influence in China. In the Indian Ocean area and the Middle East, Britain is *a* great power; in Africa south of the Sahara, she is *the* great power. And Africa is almost the only part of the world where Britain is still economically a dominant force.

But the African empire cannot support itself without an industrial center capable of standing on its feet in the event that Britain is cut off from her overseas possessions. That is why Southern Rhodesia is becoming so important to Britain; more important in some ways than the Union of South Africa, for the Union, with its Boer majority and its strident nationalism—much of it fascist in pattern and all of it virulently anti-British—is politically unstable and of very doubtful loyalty. Southern Rhodesia is one hundred percent British, and is even beginning to attract Britons from South Africa who are getting tired of Afrikaner domination and fearful of what may happen now that Smuts has gone. Little noticed by the world, Southern Rhodesia has doubled its European population since 1930, reaching one hundred thousand this year. It also has some two million Africans who are mostly excluded from political life, as well as from the better paid jobs. . . .

Southern Rhodesia is not under the Colonial Office, and neither is it going the way of South Africa. Its goal is Dominion status; its white ruling minority is profoundly loyal to Britain and, it may be added, a good deal more liberal in its general politics and its attitude to the color problem than the

white ruling class in South Africa. Industrially, it is well on the way to becoming a major producer of some important raw materials. Together with its sister territory of Northern Rhodesia it is the sterling area's biggest producer of such dollar-earning goods as chrome and copper, and its coal mines at Wankie are capable of turning out more than double their present output of two million tons annually. Apart from the dollar income these products give to the territory, they possess a crucial importance in the general scheme of post-war military strategy. The Empire now pivots on Africa, and Africa may soon pivot on Southern Rhodesia.

SUCH is the outline of the "third empire." As a *Grossraum* conception it does not lack a certain grandeur even in our age of super-states. Moreover, unlike the German conception of empire, it does not violate any of the principles on which Western civilization is based. The "planned" development of Africa makes sense economically and need not devastate African society. But the economic progress of Western Europe is a prerequisite for progress in Africa. Two world wars have destroyed Europe's capital reserves and simultaneously slowed up Africa's development. Before Africa can be dragged out of its mire, Europe must be unified.

Ambitious plans, in short, are not lacking. The weakness—at least from the Socialist point of view—is on the political side. The color problem has not been faced; or, where it has, as in Kenya, the Labor government has jettisoned its reform program in the face of determined opposition from the European settlers who have appropriated the bulk of cultivable land in the so-called "white highlands" (from which Africans are excluded). Nor has the government been able to broaden the restrictive franchise in Southern Rhodesia, where everything tends in the direction of native segregation.

Labor, it is becoming clear, either has no distinctive colonial policy or does not care to apply it if it means trouble with the settlers. (Compare this with the outcry over Palestine, where the fellaheen have *not*

been displaced.) Southern Rhodesia may be more liberal than South Africa—it could scarcely be less so—but in the long run it is not likely to present a very different picture. By no stretch of the political vocabulary can the African empire in its present form be made to square with Socialist views on the development of backward areas. These demand at least the abrogation of the color bar in industry and the reform of native agriculture rather than the creation of a class of European land owners farming their lands with hired African labor. On the West Coast, fortunately, no such class has come into existence; there are many British colonial administrators who would feel easier in their minds if the problem were everywhere as simple.

At bottom it is a question of training the Africans to accept modern work discipline. European settlement on the land, and exclusively European management in industry, represents one solution of the problem—the non-Socialist one. In the light of the growing importance of Africa in the British scheme of things, the creation of a new privileged order in that continent cannot fail to have repercussions at home. There are some Socialists who feel secretly relieved at the prospect of providing outdoor relief for a section of the middle class—including many representatives of the war-time fighting services—who might otherwise take to politics and "become a nuisance" at home. But this is to take the easy way out. If the Labor party wants to be taken seriously, it must put forward a distinctively Socialist conception of the Empire. None exists so far. It is only on school-book maps that the Empire appears in red.

PERHAPS the greatest weakness of the scheme is the absence of any overriding idea capable of binding together the European planners and the African masses. It is here that the "third empire" will ultimately have to face the Communist challenge. So far the British have never won over a native intelligentsia, if one excepts the doubtful case of the Caribbean. Mr. Guy Wint, in

his interesting book *The British in Asia*, suggests that the Congress party in India turned against the British because they had nothing to offer to the Indian intelligentsia; nothing, that is to say, that seemed really worthwhile. Africa, it is true, has little ancient culture of its own to fall back upon, but its backwardness—of which the color bar is an expression—acts as a barrier to the fusion of ruling and ruled populations.

English culture is under the best conditions difficult to assimilate, and in Africa it is likely to remain the preserve of the ruling minority. A cultural cleavage along these lines—between the governors and the governed—is prophetic of ultimate disaster. The new African intelligentsia seems torn between crude individualism and equally crude dislike of Europeans. It may be an accident that nearly all the African students one meets in London are Communists or near-Communists, but it is the sort of accident that sets one thinking. If there exists a formula capable of inspiring Africans with genuine loyalty for the Empire—other than

the loyalty of primitive tribal chiefs for the Great White Father in London, a sentiment much beloved by British conservatives in the colonies but rapidly becoming useless as an instrument of social progress—it has not yet been discovered.

Compared with some other 20th-century creations, the “third empire” looks pretty liberal. Can the reason be that it is not really designed to meet the 20th century’s needs?

British politics still conserves a certain Victorian dignity and charm. There are “disturbances” on the Gold Coast, but no concentration camps. The rule of law is supreme (so is the influence of native lawyers). The Empire is orderly and remarkably civilized considering its poverty. The Union Jack waves over a property tightly packed with antimacassars and framed family photographs, to which Labor is about to add some quite good social security laws. The question remains whether this is a combination stout enough to cope with the malignant spirits of our epoch.

THE TRUE LIFE OF MAX BOBBER

A Story

IRVING A. SANES

MR. BOBBER had not caused the scene but everyone blamed him for it. He was an innocuous man with light, moist brown eyes and an indecisive smile. He carried a brief case under his arm when he came into the restaurant; sliding it under the table, he looked around for an empty hook upon which to hang his hat, and, not finding one, sat down nervously with the hat on his lap. It was a heavy, warm day; a revolving fan riffled the steaming air over Mr. Bobber's bald skull.

Perhaps he was more self-conscious than usual that day; he couldn't help thinking everyone was looking at him as he fussed with the menu and the napkin; certainly the waiter stared rudely, sharply, so that Mr. Bobber, who was a crank about his food and could never quite decide what he wanted to order, blurted out: "Beef stew, please." Then he sat miserably, trying to summon up courage to recall the waiter, who, disappearing behind the swinging doors, appeared again like the miraculous Thurston and dumped the mess before him. Mr. Bobber tried to scrape the gravy off the meat, to cut away the nauseating fat from the slippery beef. His eyes blinked ceaselessly behind his glasses; his hat slipped to his knees.

The restaurant filled rapidly; his table was a solitary oasis that he guiltily wished to keep to himself. As long as he could sit there alone even the clatter of dishes and the hum of voices added to his privacy. Yet he knew that before he finished his meal

someone would come and sit beside him, a stranger who would examine him obliquely. In preparation, Mr. Bobber smiled his indecisive smile. Determinedly he tried to calm the anxiety that had gathered within him.

It was unfortunate, he thought, that his friend Hershel had not been able to meet him for lunch. At the last moment he had called Mr. Bobber to explain that there was an important poet in from England whom he had to interview for the magazine. An unclear but scrupulous motive prevented Mr. Bobber from suggesting that they all have lunch together. He had hung up the receiver feeling slighted and envious, and walked, alone, to the restaurant.

MR. BOBBER forgot himself in the noise and heat of the restaurant and imagined Hershel sitting beside him. Such forgetfulness was hard to come by but once acquired it took an earthquake to awaken Mr. Bobber. As the noise subsided for him he heard Hershel ask, "Why, why did you ever give up writing, Max? I can't think of anyone more suited for it."

"There are too many second-rate writers, Hershel," he answered, gravely, "for me to add one more to their number. Particularly too many second-rate Jewish writers." As soon as he had spoken he blushed; for not only would Hershel, if he were there, take offense, but it was not even what he meant. "But of course you understand that I'm joking," he said quickly, before he could be interrupted and exposed. "What I mean is that there are many who think that there is a specifically Jewish sensibility, a marvelous kind of alienation that has to be put down on paper. It's chauvinism and I won't have any part of it."

IRVING A. SANES is a young writer living in New York. He was born in Rochester in 1917, and spent four years in the Army during the war. This is Mr. Sanes' first published short story; he has just completed a novel which is now going the rounds of the publishers.

"Why do you have to?" Hershel asked, mockingly (Mr. Bobber never spared himself). "As a matter of fact, why don't you do a piece for us on that subject?"

"Why, of course," Mr. Bobber said, enthusiastically. He was already planning the article, wondering what kind of an impression it would make, when the waiter appeared to clear away his unfinished stew.

"Wasn't it no good?"

"Yes, yes, very good," Mr. Bobber answered. "I'm just not hungry."

He ordered dessert—pie a la mode—and returned to Hershel. But at this moment the strangers he had been dreading came to his table.

"Is that yours?" a woman asked, pointing to his brief case.

"I'm sorry," Mr. Bobber said, "I'll move it." But there didn't seem to be any other place. As he bent over, his hat slipped from his lap and his shoulder pushed forward against the table, almost upsetting it. "I'm sorry," Mr. Bobber repeated, "everything seems to have gone wrong." The blood rushed to his head; when he straightened up, brief case and hat in the same hand, he felt dizzy. As plainly as though he had looked into a mirror he saw his face, a deathly white, and his hands fluttered nervously, too light to control.

He placed the brief case behind his chair and balanced his hat on top of it, knowing that as soon as he removed his hand it would slip off the thin edge and fall to the floor. It disgusted him to think of the dust, the fluff of gathered dust like loose cobwebs, that would stick to the brim. The irrational urge to leave it there was only repulsed by the certainty that some one would call after him, before he could get out of the restaurant, "You've forgotten your hat."

THE woman who had asked him to move his brief case sat down beside him; across the table was another woman and a smug-looking man, dressed in tweeds, with a book under his arm—even in his confusion Mr.

Bobber tried to read the title on the dust jacket—his eyes glinting superciliously under his glasses.

Ah, I know your type, Mr. Bobber thought: a lawyer, bad eyes, bushy mustache, and the book, I'll bet, is by Edwin Berry Burgum. He waited to hear the man's voice, knowing in advance what it would sound like. And he experienced the power and disappointment of the unheard prophet when he heard:

"Yes, Wallace! I know, Wallace! But don't be let down too much when you see him retreat. After all, we don't have to look too far to see where his class interests belong. For the time being, all right. But how far can you go with the *best* bourgeois reformist?"

"Oh, you idiot," Mr. Bobber howled to himself. If only Hershel was there so they could exchange smiles.

The waiter brought his dessert but now he was in no hurry to leave. He nibbled slowly at the pie and scraped the melting ice cream over his fork. The woman who sat beside him—he stole a look at her out of the corner of his eye: her complexion was yellow, and coarse hairs grew out of a black birthmark just above her lip—folded her elbows on the table and said fiercely: "Every time I think of that ignoramus Winchell, of the harm that unutterably stupid man can do, I could scream. You would think that even the simplest person would understand that they are dealing with a man who has never read an *important* book in his life."

Oh, sure, Mr. Bobber thought, anyone who hasn't read Marx has missed all the important books. And what's more, I'm willing to bet that you never read him yourself. Not even the first volume. You mass mind, you. Stalin is your Winchell.

Now Mr. Bobber was looking boldly from one to the other. It did not occur to him to think that he was no longer embarrassed, that his timidity had left him as completely as though he had been sitting with friends. He wanted to break into their conversation, to lend some structure to it,

and then to destroy these fools and their faith.

"Listen," the second woman said, "Ralph and I are going to the ballet tonight. Why don't you and Morry come along?"

"I don't know. I feel like Lenin when he sat at a Beethoven concert: I want to stroke people's heads and say nice, silly things. And we can't afford to let ourselves feel that way when there are unmentionable people like that columnist around."

Oh no, this is really too much, Mr. Bobber thought, writhing. He saw Lenin sitting in the City Center with a wig drawn over his bald head; he saw Lenin sitting in a cafeteria with a *New Republic* resting on the sugar bowl in front of him.

MR. BOBBER patted his mouth with the napkin. It was time for him to return to his office. But he could not tear himself away. He continued to stare at the man in tweeds.

"Are you eavesdropping?"

"Well, I couldn't help overhearing," Mr. Bobber answered, flustered.

"What do you care, Ralph?" the woman who sat across from Mr. Bobber asked.

"Perhaps you're making a loyalty check?" the man said.

"I certainly shouldn't include you among the dangerous ones," Mr. Bobber answered and got up to leave. The words rang pleasantly in his ears; it would be nice to repeat them to his wife that night—he resolved not to add a syllable.

"I know your type," the man said, rising with Mr. Bobber.

It seemed monstrous to Mr. Bobber that he should be identified as a "type." For a moment he was assailed with the doubt that he had listened to the conversation because, degree of intelligence aside, he was very much like this man: a dilettante, a poseur, frightened only lest someone discover that his principles were only bits of protective coloration. It was vital that he discover whether this man really did know what "type" he was.

"Do you know who I am?" he asked

excitedly. "Just what did you mean by that remark?"

"Ralph, please!" the women chorused.

"Do you agree that Winchell is a war-monger?" the man demanded, banging his fist on the table so that the silverware rang like a bell in the sudden stillness of the restaurant.

"I agree that you are a damned fool," Mr. Bobber shouted back. "I vote a straight Republican ticket and you know what you can do with Wallace, and Stalin too."

"And you walk through picket lines," the man said, sitting down, sneering and satisfied.

"And I walk through picket lines," Mr. Bobber agreed. He reached back for his hat and briefcase and stamped out.

"Hey, you." The waiter came running to the door and called after him. "Come back and pay your bill."

Mr. Bobber returned slowly and placed a five-dollar bill on the counter. Behind him he heard the man laugh harshly and the women simper agreement.

"You damned fools," Mr. Bobber said, turning toward them, "you pitiful damned fools."

The man leaped from the table and advanced threateningly. He seized the lapels of Mr. Bobber's jacket and shook him as though he were a child.

"Take your hands off me," Mr. Bobber said, "take your hands off at once." But his own arms hung limply at his sides and he made no effort to extricate himself. He suddenly realized from the murmuring of the people around him that he could expect no sympathy. At best they considered him a nut, or, much worse, they probably considered him in no other way. He was a nut, a queer fellow who came into public places to make scenes.

"Take your hands off, take them off I tell you."

The manager came over and said: "You'll have to leave at once. You're creating a public disturbance."

"But can't you see," Mr. Bobber protested, "that it's not my fault."

"You started it," the manager said, "I heard what you shouted at these people."

The man released Mr. Bobber and returned to his table.

"I don't suppose you care to press charges," Mr. Bobber (what had his imagination composed?) howled after him. "You don't believe in running to the officers of a capitalist state, do you comrade?" But the man ignored him. He huddled together with the two women in a malicious triangle of laughter.

RETURNING to his place of business, Mr. Bobber decided that until he could recover the essence of the embarrassing experience with a cool disposition, he would put it out of mind. This he accomplished by returning to the conversation he had held with Hershel. Unlike most fantasies, it was rigorously logical, and if Mr. Bobber always won the arguments he inaugurated it was not until his intelligence, supported by respected quotations and innumerable footnotes, a fine irony and minor revisions, had been given a complete workout. By the time he reached the used car lot that he owned with his brother-in-law, the scene in the restaurant had been forgotten.

He sat in the small, green-shingled, one-room office, surrounded by the automobiles that he had almost inadvertently collected. He sold a 1941 Chevrolet; his partner sold a 1940 Pontiac; he filled out the forms that transferred ownership and the forms that insured the automobiles; for the rest of the time he sat with his feet on the desk and read the introduction to *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. He marked a paragraph that contained a reference to Karl Marx.

"It's such a lot of nonsense," he thought, putting the book down for a moment. "I become uneasy whether I read a word for or a word against. And I really don't care a bit, not one way or the other. But then why can't I get out of the 30's?"

He left his office at six o'clock and drove northward to Queens, where, in his youth, there had not even been a party branch. Now he lived there. And he was happy, too.

"I'm taking a shower, darling," his wife called from the bathroom after he had let himself into the apartment. "You remember that we are playing bridge with the Golds tonight, don't you?"

"I can't hear a word!" he shouted. It was a silly lie, one of a series of foolish lies that he told for no reason at all. He prided himself on the fact that he never told important lies, but when he searched his conscience to discover the impulse for these harmless fabrications he always bogged down in the complexity of his investigation.

"I said that we are going to the Golds' for bridge," his wife repeated, emerging from the bathroom. The water shivered on her body; she held the towel behind her and rubbed vigorously. "Did you have a good day?"

"We sold three cars," he said, marveling that he had become accustomed to her beautiful body. If there was some scale by which he could compare loss and gain, weigh the smooth body against the lost friends, the breasts against a poem he might have written! He planted a perfunctory kiss on her cheek and a warmer one on her throat. For a moment he contemplated kissing her stomach but he contented himself with the thought.

"Goodness," she said, "we'll be so rich soon that we won't know what to do with our money."

"I would like to get to Europe before they start another war," he said.

"But everything is in ruins there, darling. Why can't we go to some place like Bermuda?"

MR. BOBBER didn't answer. He went into their bedroom and dressed for dinner. He didn't look forward to an evening with the Golds. The Golds, unfortunately, lived in the same apartment building, but how he had ever allowed himself to get involved in what passed for friendship with them was more than he could understand. To start with, he had never played bridge before he met the Golds. His knowledge of cards, until recently, ended with the memory of

the shrewd and bitter pinochle bouts his father had engaged in. He recalled the first evening the Golds had visited them. They had come to discuss an action that would prevent the landlord from obtaining an increase in the rents. It had seemed a worthy cause to Mr. Bobber and he made several suggestions that had won Mr. Gold's admiration. After the plans had been made the Golds arose, hesitantly, and stood before the door, saying goodnight so halfheartedly, almost desperately, that Bertha had suggested that they remain for tea and cake. Eagerly they returned to the living room, and they clung to their seats with a bewildering tenacity until after midnight, leaving only after the Bobbers had promised to visit them soon. It was obvious that what they valued was company and not particularly the company of the Bobbers. Their great horror was to be left alone.

They visited the Golds. A week later the Golds called on them. It was on the third exchange that Mr. Gold asked: "Would you folks care for a few rubbers of bridge?"

"Well," Mr. Bobber had answered, "I've never played but I don't imagine we would have any trouble learning."

"No," Mrs. Gold said, "we can play your game. What is it? Gin? Poker? Pinochle?"

The Bobbers admitted that they played none of the games although Bertha had played them all, years ago before she met Max.

Mr. Gold gave them Culbertson's Gold Book, remarking: "It's a game of intelligence, Mr. Bobber. In a few weeks you will be giving us pointers."

"But what do you do evenings?" Mr. Gold asked, truly puzzled. "What do you do for pastime if you don't play cards?"

"Why, talk and read," Mr. Bobber answered, wishing that there was an unobtrusive way to explain that he was an intellectual.

"Isn't that awfully boring? Nothing but talk, talk, talk. I got to have action, something to do all the time."

And now, Mr. Bobber reflected, he too had something to do. He had something to

do twice a week, week in and week out.

Mr. Bobber joined his wife at the dinner table. "How long does this have to go on, Bertha?" he asked.

"How long does what have to go on?"

"This business with the Golds. Why can't we ever see my old friends?"

"Do I ever stop you from inviting them?"

The question reduced him to silence. He supposed that he had stopped seeing his old friends because of Bertha. It had been a conscious choice: during the period he had courted her he had realized that her interests were so much different from his own and so much stronger—although she was attracted by his intellectuality, his concern with what she called the "better things"—that they would, in the end, comprise his life. Now she could ask him that question with righteous indignation: she sensed, somehow, what he had so carefully concealed—his shame at having sunk into a placid existence, an almost luxurious retreat from which he could no longer extricate himself.

AT EIGHT o'clock the Bobbers took the elevator to the twelfth floor and knocked on the Golds' door. Little Michael Gold admitted them. He was a thin, nervous boy, about twelve years old, with great dark eyes and a head too large for his body, a beautiful head covered with dark golden hair that fell untidily over his forehead, almost hiding his soft, black, wide, disconcerting eyes that seemed at once idiotic and wise. Looking into the living room Mr. Bobber saw that the bridge table was set; the Bobbers had to walk around the boy, who stood obstinately in their path.

The Golds were in the kitchen, mixing cocktails. Mr. Gold, his wife's apron drawn around his waist, called: "Make yourselves at home. We'll be with you in a minute."

The Bobbers settled on the sofa and examined an old magazine.

"There," Mr. Gold said, leaving the kitchen, "the cocktails can chill while we play."

They seated themselves around the table

and Mrs. Bobber, having drawn the highest card, dealt the hands. It was Mr. Gold's convention that bridge and conversation were mutually exclusive; they played with a silent intensity, stopping to quarrel over a bid or when there was a question whether Mr. Bobber had not, accidentally, implied certain holdings when he hesitated over the choice of a lead.

Mr. Bobber knew that the game was an empty, formalized passage of time, a conventional attempt to relieve tedium by forcing different people to concentrate on each other. Yet he was pleased with a continuous situation in which he could demonstrate his mental superiority. But this too had its drawbacks: Mr. Gold had a choleric disposition and when he lost hands that could not be attributed to the cards he quarreled with his wife, blaming her stupidity for his losses. His conduct forced Mr. Bobber to misplay himself in order to restore a semblance of peace.

This particular evening the game ended pleasantly; it was found that the Golds were six dollars ahead. Mr. Gold marched into the kitchen to get the drinks. But when he returned to the living room he tripped over his son's outstretched leg. The cocktail glasses slid off the tray, shattered on the floor, and stained the rug. Mr. Bobber looked, hurriedly, at the unfortunate boy, expecting to see him cringe against the wall. But Michael was unperturbed, he even laughed. It was a senseless laugh, like the sound of a distraught parrot.

"You fool," Mr. Gold shouted, "didn't you see me coming?"

"No, daddy," Michael laughed again, this time with the dry barking sound of a seal, so that Mr. Bobber thought he was trying to infuriate his father.

"Don't you lie to me!" Mr. Gold screamed. "You know if there is one thing I can't stand is when you lie."

"Send him to bed, Jack," Mrs. Gold said, compassionately.

"First he will clean all the glass off the rug. Not because he made me spill the drinks, mind you, but because he lied. I

insist on one thing but on that I insist one hundred per cent: He must be honest and obedient."

"Do what daddy asks, Michael," Mrs. Gold said, going to the child and touching his arm. "Mother will get you a dust pan."

The child crawled over the carpet on his hands and knees, furtively whisking the splintered glass. He seemed pleased with his task but he accomplished nothing. He lifted his head once and smiled shyly at Mr. Bobber as though there was a secret between them; Mr. Bobber smiled back, politely, uneasily. Mr. Gold watched them both like a grim eavesdropper. Then he jumped to his feet and said:

"Give that broom to me. If I wait for you to clean up it will take a month of Sundays."

The boy clung to the whisk broom for a second and then gave it up, reluctantly. Without a word he went off to his bedroom.

MR. BOBBER cleared his throat: "I imagine it's quite a job, bringing up a child."

"Michael is particularly tough," Mr. Gold said bitterly.

"Oh, I don't know, he looks like an average boy to me."

"Listen, we got so much trouble with him in school that if I didn't go there twice a year to argue with the principal he would still be in the second grade. I can't make him put his mind to anything."

"Maybe he doesn't like school," Mr. Bobber suggested.

"If he likes it or not he's got to pass his grades, doesn't he?" Mr. Gold looked up suspiciously. "How old is he, he should know what he likes?"

Ignoring a warning glance from Bertha, Mr. Bobber continued: "I hold that children are like adults and that we have no right to impose our values on them."

"Just wait until you have one of your own and you'll see how much good theories do you."

"No," Mr. Bobber said, "it is not just a theory; it meets the test of practicability."

Let me ask you a question: how can you force your son to behave honestly?"

"I insist on it," Mr. Gold said, stubbornly. "Wait until you have one of your own."

"How do you insist? Do you spank him? Do you deny him a pleasure he has been anticipating?"

"If necessary, yes."

"That's just it," Mr. Bobber said, triumphantly. "The exercise of authority accomplishes nothing. Let me put it to you this way: children only lie when they are forced to, when they fear the consequences of speaking the truth. They know that they cannot resist authority directly so they engage in a devious struggle against it. But if we treat them with respect, as adults over whom we have no power, they will come to us with their problems in a straightforward manner."

Mr. Bobber saw that Mrs. Gold, at least, was impressed. Mr. Gold looked doubtful, but even the doubt was a sign of victory and Mr. Bobber hurried on:

"Just consider, what rights can we have over our children? If we love them we want them to grow up to be free, spontaneous people. Unfortunately that may mean that their values will be completely different from our own and that they will be forced to travel a different road from our own."

"You don't really believe that stuff, do you?" Mr. Gold interrupted. "Listen, when the time comes you'll spank your child as often and as hard as the next man. Unless you want to raise a wild Indian."

"No," Mr. Bobber said, quietly, "I have no right to spank anyone."

"He's like that," Mrs. Bobber said, irritated but proud. "It will probably be my job to discipline the child."

"Let me ask *you* a question," Mr. Gold said. "What if you have a child who wants to run out on the street? He's too young to realize that he may be killed and he wants to run out on the street. Just like that, a free, spontaneous impulse."

Mr. Bobber polished his glasses carefully. It was a worthwhile question. What was he to answer? It annoyed him that he should

see, on his wife's face, confidence in whatever he would answer and, at the same time, scorn for Gold.

"We must put everything in perspective," he said, haltingly. "It is true that we must take precautions with the very young, but that can be accomplished with a minimum of guidance. Still, when they are old enough to reason, at seven or eight, we must leave the major decisions to them."

You talk like a book, man," Mr. Gold answered. "Do you have any idea of the kind of world we live in?" He looked fiercely around the room. "We live in a world of competition. If I don't make Michael study, he won't finish school. If he doesn't finish school he will wind up a day-laborer. And yet, as long as he lives in my house, he's going to be brought up to expect the best, the highest standards. How will he get used to the life of a worker? He'll be miserable; he'll have to marry out of his class; his own children will have no respect for him. That's why I've got to make him do things my way. And I'll live to hear him thank me for it."

"But why take such a dark view?" Mr. Bobber said persuasively. "Why are you so certain that if he fails at school he will fail at everything? Perhaps he's good with his hands, maybe he will make a musician or a craftsman. Why do you order him to be studious? And why do you think that it will get you anywhere? If he hasn't the mind for it he will escape your authority by one means or another."

"It's the way the world runs," Mr. Gold said with finality. "You have a cop on the street, an army in the field, and the God of Wrath in Heaven. They are all there for the same reason, to protect us against our own stupidity."

"Then I would rather be stupid than submit to any of them!" Mr. Bobber rose, excitedly. Victory had slipped out of his hands. He regretted now that he had not been more vigorous, that he had tried to spare Mr. Gold's feelings by not attacking his entire stupid philosophy. If he had only

admitted at once that, "Yes, if you want to preserve a rotting society it is all right to bring your son up with an iron hand; but if you have ever hoped that there might one day be a free society you will try to raise a free child—take your choice."

"You would rather not submit," Mr. Gold mocked. "I suppose you punch the policeman in the nose when he gives you a ticket for double parking. That stuff sounds fine in the books you carry around under your arm but try to put them into practice. I don't have to tell you where you'll wind up."

Mr. Bobber had heard this argument from his father years ago. He felt tired and defeated. It was only lacking for Mr. Gold to say, "Wait until you're older and have had some experience with the world; you'll sing a different tune."

"Well," he said, "it's been a pleasant evening. Next week we play at our apartment." He motioned to his wife and she followed him to the door.

But Mr. Gold had the advantage now; he was not willing to let them go. He followed them to the foyer and held Mr. Bobber's arm. "I just want to check one thing," he said, slyly. "What would you do in case of a war with Russia? Don't get me wrong now, I don't care one way or the other. I just want to prove something to myself."

"What do you want to prove? That everyone who reads a book is a Communist?"

"It's just an idea I got. Give me a simple answer."

"I can't give you a simple answer. It isn't a simple question. Right now I don't think I could support either side."

"That's dodging," Mr. Gold insisted. "All I want is a simple answer. One way or the other."

Mr. Gold was now holding him by his coat lapels, exactly as the man in the restaurant had done that afternoon. He felt trapped. Yet he stood up to Mr. Gold with a great deal of dignity.

"You are an evil and ignorant man," he said. "I will not answer your question."

Mr. Gold released him, slowly, and the Bobbers walked out of the apartment.

WHEN they returned to their apartment Mrs. Bobber went directly to bed. Mr. Bobber, conscious of her anger, remained silent until he heard the bedroom door close behind her, then he sat down on the chair that stood beside the bookcase and shut his eyes. He tried to assemble the events of the day into a meaningful pattern but he was infatuated with the imaginary consequences of the article he had already written for Hershel. He was heavy with fatigue; he spoke, to himself, words that were a continuation of the real and imaginary situations that had disturbed him all day; into his half-conscious dream entered the recognition that he had known beforehand: that Gold would trip over his son's leg, that there was even an understanding between the boy and himself. But I am not guilty, he thought. And, with the same breath, he said to Hershel and the English poet, who had materialized as an old friend, "We are not responsible for each other; not guilty, no one is to blame for the fall of another." The cocktails splashed on the carpet again and the Stalinist from the restaurant crawled on his knees, gathering the splinters of glass.

Seen from above, Mr. Bobber's feet stretched slyly out to the footstool, rested uneasily on the silk brocade he dared not spot. His harassed soul rolled on the soft rug, caged between the polished furniture, beneath a painting by Braque. "My wife," he explained to Hershel and the poet, who nodded understandingly, "is a simple woman." His wife bid one spade in an injured voice and Mr. Gold sneered, "What are they walking around with books for? They want to show someone they know how to read?" The embarrassment was too great; Hershel and the poet disappeared.

Then Mr. Bobber found himself seated on a barrel in a large, dim, dusty room. He was addressing two men whose eyes were clear and intent but whose bodies were lost in shadow. He knew, somehow, that he was in a farmhouse, on the top floor of a farmhouse, at the far end of which was a sloping wall and a darkened window crossed

by the naked branches of an apple tree. While he spoke, clearly, quietly, with an impressive clarity, one of the men walked over to the window. Mr. Bobber raised his voice and called to the man to get him an apple. The man stretched too far, lost his balance, and fell out of sight. Mr. Bobber's other listener ran to the window, from where he screamed: "Oh, my God! Look what's happened to him!"

Without moving, Mr. Bobber knew that the man had been split from the groin up by the twisted limbs of the tree. He saw a black line of blood begin at the pants and widen upward; it was like the slow splitting of a heavy boulder, the blood did not flow but spread in a jagged seam. Then, without going to the window, Mr. Bobber knew that the man had fallen clear of the tree and was running through an orchard that was broken by hedges. The man ran wildly, without screaming, as though he was not conscious of what had happened to him. Mr. Bobber's mind lost him; he returned to the man who was staring out of the window, repeating: "My God. Look what happened to him."

What disturbed Mr. Bobber most was his own lack of horror. He felt that what had happened was of small importance, he felt no sorrow for the man who had fallen from the window and he suspected that the one who remained also lacked emotion. Yet he felt that he was capable of doing something, that it was expected of him. "I ought to be able to clear this up," he said, getting up from the barrel and walking over to the window.

Looking out he saw the fall re-enacted. This time the man fell through the branches of the tree without being impaled. It seemed, for a moment, that he had suffered no injury. Then Mr. Bobber saw that his arm, from elbow to wrist, had been smashed, the upper part was held rigidly parallel to the ground, the forearm, distorted and distended, crossed with lines of blood that had already

dried, flopping from side to side. The man ran under the window, his face lifted to Mr. Bobber as though to say, "You see?" Then he was lost in the hedges again.

The man who stood beside Mr. Bobber looked at him questioningly. Quite suddenly the whole problem — for all that had taken place seemed to be steps in a problem that Mr. Bobber had to solve and, he explained to himself, solve dispassionately—was illuminated by his intelligence. He turned to the man whose face, even before Mr. Bobber spoke, indicated a willingness to be persuaded, almost, in fact, a conviction in advance of whatever Mr. Bobber might say. He placed his hand on the man's shoulder and opened his mouth to speak. Then he awoke. He turned his head and fell asleep again, trying to recover the thread of his dream, but there was nothing more. He tossed uncomfortably for a while, then he sat up in the chair.

You see," he said to the poet, removing his shoes and tiptoeing toward the bedroom, "it's all right. It's interesting but meaningless; it's important, but not for the life I lead from day to day."

His wife mumbled sleepily when he crept into bed. He knew that she wasn't awake and didn't answer. He lay beside her without thinking anything until her breathing was even again. He could see her face in the strips of white light that shone through the slanted blinds. It was a smooth, round, untroubled face, protected by cold cream against the mere fact of years. Mr. Bobber thought that it would be good if he could lose himself in her depthless placidity.

He moved closer so that his leg touched hers; she stirred again and smiled from the depth of her sleep. Alone in the room, in the bed, with his wife, Mr. Bobber closed his ears to the troubled hum that arose from the street. And he closed his mind and slept.

FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

THE GOOD LIFE IN FAYETTEVILLE

Memoirs of a Tarheel

HORTENSE PERELL

IN SEPTEMBER when the autumnal haze descends on the cliff dwellings of the Bronx, and the temple seats go on sale for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, I get the urge to buy a round-trip ticket to Fayetteville, North Carolina, seat of Cumberland County. I would be home for the holidays. Better still, I would be magically eight again, wading in Cross Creek and feeling red mud ooze between my bare toes.

As children we lived the Brotherhood of Man. Moses' band of Israelites boasted two Gentile members, Ella Mae and Josie, who were saved along with the rest of us Chosen when the Cape Fear River, which walled our town, ebbed during the drought period, and the red clay bank could be used for continuous deliverances from Pharaoh. The difference between Ella Mae and Josie and the true descendants of our "Israelite tribe" only became apparent when the sun set on late Friday afternoons, and we had to cut short our play to hurry home for the Sabbath. Our gang trooped up the broad avenue of Hay Street to the rhythmic chorusing of:

"For I'm a Tarheel born
And a Tarheel bred,
And when I die
I'll be a Tarheel dead!"

HORTENSE PERELL was born and raised in Fayetteville, North Carolina. Indeed, this article seems to suggest that she was born and raised *with* Fayetteville, both town and child growing up together. But Mrs. Perell now lives in the Bronx, while Fayetteville presumably has to fend for itself. This is Mrs. Perell's first published writing.

Invariably Ella Mae and Josie, the real Tarheels, were drowned out.

Born deep in "Yankee" territory, New York City, I only staked my claim on the Southland at the age of three. (Most of my Jewish friends, I daresay, were likewise conceived above the Mason-Dixon Line.) In that period of the early 20's there were no more than twelve Jewish families in the whole town of Fayetteville. Not enough to create a stir. Certainly not enough to warrant a house of worship. Because this was so, when the Holy Days came the hat was passed around for contributions to hire the services of an itinerant rabbi. Naturally, pains were taken during the negotiations to conceal the fact that no temple was available. Time enough for him to learn this when he was duly committed to conduct services from a makeshift pulpit erected in a loft over McKeithan's Drug Store. At least it was centrally located; smack in the middle of Hay Street.

THE years following the First World War were rich in opportunity for the man willing to gamble. My father was just such a man. When I was three he was a construction engineer engaged in building new barracks for Fort Bragg, N. C. His spare moments were spent appraising the town of Fayetteville some ten miles distant. It did not take long for my father to be convinced that Fayetteville was just the place for him to settle down in. So it was that my mother, older brother, and I found ourselves in this "camp town" many months before the camp barracks themselves were completed. The

living-quarters my father secured for us were situated above an empty store, later to be known as the Bragg Bargain House.

When my father first strode the wide, pleasant streets of Fayetteville with calculating design he must have presented a poser to the townspeople. He was then in his early forties, tall and well-knit, with light brown hair still plentiful, a high forehead, and wide blue eyes that held a glint of mischief. At first glance he might have easily claimed kinship with the early settlers of Campbelltown, as Fayetteville was known in the year 1762. But the link with those Scotch-Irish pioneers was quickly dispelled the instant my father opened his mouth, by his unmistakable Riga accent.

According to my father, the business of keeping his gloves spanking white for the Ruler of all Russia was more than he could stand. It could well have been true: my father was incapable of any restraint.

When my father revolted against the Czar and the confines of his native village in Riga, he could hardly have foreseen how far his rebellion would carry him. When my father deposited us in Fayetteville, population 8,000, he knew nothing of its historical background. To him it was just a one-horse town, awaiting my father's magic business touch. I'm certain he never knew the town's name was changed from Campbelltown to Fayetteville because of the impassioned Gallic oratory of a noted Frenchman—a Marquess de la Fayette—who once spoke from the balcony of the old Slave Market in the town square.

THE year I was rounding out nine my father conceived the idea of a low-priced bungalow colony. It was a capital idea, to borrow my father's expression. He supplied the idea and a myriad of partners supplied the capital—a business principle to which my father was very loyal. Still, it must have had some merit. Property was bought high on a hill in the western portion of town, and broken into 60 by 75 lots; and my father's knowledge of construction served him well. Within the year, moving vans were doing a rush job on Tager Terrace.

Like many a promotional genius, my father was hopelessly chained to vanity. One street of the proposed development had to

bear his name or the deal was off. Alas, Tager Terrace, once a proud monument to a man's ambition, is now Park Street.

My mother was, as always, chief victim of my father's egotism. My father argued thus: Tager Terrace would be a meaningless street sign if the Tager clan did not reside there. Correct? Our presence there would have a reassuring effect upon some of the townspeople. Correct? My mother, however, was on occasion a total stranger to logic: "Lowie, please. Let's stay where we are." In moments of stress my mother invariably fell back upon her special interpretation of my father's given name, Louis, with varying effectiveness.

Anyway, by 1922 we were firmly entrenched on Tager Terrace, conditioned to the mile and a half trip to town and friendly with our *goyishe neighbors*. That year was a banner one on many counts. It marked the time our first Jewish synagogue was erected. It was also the year one hundred percent rental showed on the books of my father's dream bungalow project. The new synagogue and my father's bungalow colony came to life simultaneously; the plaster on the new walls of the synagogue dried at about the same time as did the plaster in the shingle bungalows of Tager Terrace.

This happy coincidence developed one serious drawback when Rosh Hashanah came around. When it did my mother was equal to the occasion.

"Well, Louis," she said, her normally gentle voice tinged with a metallic ring. "Feel like walking a mile and a half to the new synagogue?"

Louis said nothing for a few minutes, which in itself was unusual. Then my father let his deep blue eyes roam over me in a suddenly tender sweep.

"You know, Paulie, I don't think Horty looks too well. You sure she's all right?"

His voice, always rich and expressive, now literally throbbed with anxious undertones. All bogus, of course. To the best of my knowledge he never suffered one ounce of distress over me after the doctor told him to pass out the cigars. (Actually he had been preparing himself for another son, and when I materialized the smokes were given out with the air of a gambler down on his luck.) But my mother rose to the

bait. My mother was sure that I, a healthy, overgrown youngster of nine, was far too fragile for the rigors of a foot march to the new house of worship.

Rosh Hashanah morning my mother, dressed in a manner calculated to dazzle the Lord and the women of the congregation, clambered into the front seat of our temperamental Essex. She shot one apprehensive glance skyward and another to the rear seat to insure my presence. After which she rode with my father, stiff and disapproving, to a clandestine spot midway down Gillespie Street. Here the car was parked. Rugged individualist though my father was, he was not bold enough to drive up to the synagogue door on Rosh Hashanah.

My father was, I honestly feel, just as good a Jew as the rest. The temple was important to him; placing a *yamulke* on his head and draping a *tallis* on his shoulders fulfilled some very deep need for him. Yet within sight of Beth Israel Congregation some few blocks down on Cool Spring Street my father drew me aside. He touched forefinger to nose in a characteristic gesture.

"Horty, when you get into shul remember to look tired. Mention a few times that your feet hurt from the long walk from the Terrace."

I remembered.

BUT the real excitement was in the wild activity preceding the holiday. It was the kind of frenzy dear to the hearts of Northern manufacturers who sent their drummers to the deep South on a flying trip to cash in on the High Holidays.

The drummers could naturally expect nothing approximating a field day in the town of Fayetteville, boasting some twelve Jewish families. However, the surrounding towns of Raleigh, Greensboro, and Goldsboro more than compensated for a one-night stand in our town. I remember Mr. Kramer. This gentleman traveled out of Baltimore with a misses' and ladies' coat line. He stayed with us, cases and all, putting up with the unyielding springs of our Grand Rapids sofa in preference to the hospitality of the local hotel. My mother's expert cooking had something to do with it.

My feelings towards Mr. Kramer were mixed. When he swooned over my mother's

food, when he passed around some much-abused snapshots of his family back home, I could be fond of him. But when he palmed off a beat-up sample coat on me in the fateful year 1922, affection vanished.

"Kramer's folly" was a royal-blue plush affair sporting a pseudo-ermine collar. My mother thought it was gorgeous, an opinion reinforced by the fact that it was a gift—a token of appreciation to the family from that homesick wanderer out of Baltimore. Mr. Kramer's gesture was more than touching; that monstrosity of a coat left an almost permanent scar upon me. Such a coat required shoes befitting its grandeur. The low oxfords I favored were out of the question, so by dint of threat and force I was fitted for Betty Janes. It mattered little that the patent leather slippers added inches to my already over-large feet, even though they pinched my toes—I was to look like a proper young lady at least once a year.

It was a disastrous enterprise. Decked out in unaccustomed holiday frumpery and cramped toes, I was the image of abject misery. Besides which, though "Kramer's Folly" bagged out ludicrously on my stocky figure, its ampleness disappeared without reason in the cut of the sleeves, which stubbornly refused to reach my wrists. A starched, orange-colored dotted swiss organ-die dress, complete with wide sash, added the final touch to my get-up.

My mother, on the other hand, was a vision of loveliness in her New York styled gown and fur-trimmed coat. She was generally considered the best dressed woman in town during the holiday season, a reputation she held for a flatteringly long period. Behind this local conquest was the needlework of Mme. Helen, girlhood friend of my mother from the "old country." When my father made annual trips to New York City for fill-in merchandise his first stop was always the workshop of Mme. Helen. She had a large, rambling apartment overlooking Central Park on 110th Street. She also had a thirty-eight form which made it possible for my mother to have her dresses run up without benefit of in-the-flesh fittings.

DURING the high holiday dress-up period I must have been a painfully sharp thorn in my mother's side. It was therefore

merciful that I took leave of my parents when we entered the small vestibule of the synagogue on Rosh Hashanah. According to custom, my mother found her place on the side reserved for the women of the congregation and my father made his way to the opposite side. I went up a series of stairs, two at a time, to the balcony where we children were expected to be seen but not heard.

Once separated from my mother's finery, I found a new ground for resentment presenting itself in the remoteness of the balcony at the time when the Torah was removed from the Ark. Without clearly understanding why, the desire to be near enough to touch the honored scrolls as they were paraded down the shul aisles was powerful among us children. I would fasten my eyes upon the locked cupboard behind the raised platform, my view blocked at times by the Rabbi's figure and the outstretched exhortation of his *tallis*-covered arms. But when the moment for the removal of the Torah came, I would lean forward on my folding chair with the nervous anticipation of a marathon runner, ready to sprint from the balcony when the procession began. Then the race was to the swiftest. I had long legs and could take the stairs ahead of the other children to get a vantage point. There I waited for the approach of the scrolls. They were beautiful to me, jewel-studded, clothed in gleaming white satin and brocaded with thick, gold thread. I reached out and brushed the Torah with two fingers, and neither I nor my friends would, under pain of death, consider washing the hand that had kissed the blessed scroll for many a day.

The week between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur was a fairly placid interlude, colored only by boasts of how long we children were going to fast on the Day of Atonement. (My mother felt that half a day's abstinence from food was sufficient for me.) On this holiday there was no problem about transportation. My father engaged two rooms at the Lafayette Hotel directly across from our place of business, the Bragg Bargain House, for the Yom Kippur holiday. For this was the one day my father mustered up as much religion as the next man,

with certain reservations. Naturally he fasted on Yom Kippur. And, equally naturally—for him—he sneaked in a cigarette or two behind the synagogue whenever he could manage it undetected. Very likely he made a bold concession to the Lord by not inhaling—only puffing.

When the weak rays of the sun set upon the roof of Beth Israel Congregation on the Day of Atonement the small band of worshippers were recalled from Mt. Sinai and emptied upon the synagogue steps of Cool Spring Street.

BUT, alas, today the tiny shul in Cumberland County is but a memory. I am a citizen of the Bronx, and I must confess the large-scale worship I meet on High Holidays and the strange faces make me shrink. Back home in Cumberland County I knew every officer of our synagogue by first name, and in Beth Israel Congregation a bronze plaque proclaims my father as one of the founders of its house of worship.

Assuredly the premise that God is everywhere, New York as well as Fayetteville, condemns my attitude as childish. Nonetheless, I have never been able to recapture the High Holiday spirit as I knew it in that small Southern town of my youth. Fayetteville now has 72 Jewish families making a total of about three hundred Jewish souls. Beth Israel no longer suffices—there is talk of a Jewish community center.

I dare say that were I to return now to the old home town, I should be as alien there as I feel in the houses of worship I have frequented these many years up North. Here, only the Yizkor memorial service brings me to a synagogue door. "Door" is quite correct because I have no seat for the High Holidays, and from the door I hear the voice of a strange rabbi and feel myself alone and a stranger among faces unfamiliar to me jammed into the house of God. I have a haunting feeling that under these conditions that rebel from Riga, my father, is not too well pleased with my Yizkor, for him. He would expect me to have a ringside seat, at the very least come September. But this is not Cumberland County—times have changed.

CEDARS OF LEBANON

FROM THE SONGS TO ZION

JEHUDA HALEVI

JEHUDA HALEVI, probably the foremost Hebrew poet since Biblical days, has enriched the Jewish tradition with its most beautiful expressions of the religious Jew's impassioned longing for Zion. Born in Toledo around 1080, Halevi was one of the great worthies of the Jewish golden age in Spain, synthesizing in his thought and writing the traditions of Hebrew and rabbinic literature, Arabic poetry, and Greek philosophy. Towards the end of his life, he set off for Palestine in the hope of hastening the day of redemption. We know he reached Cairo, and there

the record ends. According to legend, he died outside Jerusalem reciting his "Ode to Zion."

The selection below is not a single poem, but is an arrangement of short passages from various parts of Halevi's poetic works. The arrangement and translation is by Charles Reznikoff. Mr. Reznikoff did not here attempt an exact reproduction of Halevi's rhymes and rhythms—he finds justification for this in a sentence from the writings of the poet himself: "It is but proper that mere beauty of sound should yield to lucidity of speech."—ED.

MY HEART in the East
and I at the farthest West:
how can I taste what I eat or find it sweet
while Zion
is in the cords of Edom and I
bound by the Arab?
Beside the dust of Zion
all the good of Spain is light;
and a light thing to leave it.

And if it is now only a land of howling
beasts and owls,
was it not so
when given to our fathers—
all of it only a heritage of thorns and
thistles?
But they walked in it—
His name in their hearts, sustenance!—
as in a park among flowers.

The bitterness of parting and the honey of
your kiss;
would that, after my death, I could still hear
the sound of the golden bells upon your
skirts!

In the midst of the sea

when the hills of it slide and sink
and the wind
lifts the water like sheaves—
now a heap of sheaves and then a floor for
the threshing—
and sail and planks shake
and the hands of the sailors are rags,
and no place for flight but the sea,
and the ship is hidden in waves
like a theft in the thief's hand,
suddenly the sea is smooth
and the stars shine on the water.

Wisdom and knowledge—except to swim—
have neither fame nor favor here;
a prisoner of hope, he gave his spirit to the
winds,
and is owned by the sea;
between him and death—a board.

Zion, do you ask if the captives
are at peace—
the few that are left?
I cry out like the jackals when I think of
their grief;
but, dreaming of the end of their captivity,
I am like a harp for your songs.

ON THE HORIZON

Rumblings on the Pastoral Left

NATHAN GLAZER

THE most careful observer might have been thrown off recently by an announcement of a mass meeting on Palestine at the St. Nicholas Arena, in New York, to be sponsored by Hashomer Hatzair and the Progressive Zionist League. This section of the Zionist movement, it had been whispered, was the channel by which Soviet influences hoped to play a role in Eretz Yisrael.

The principal speaker at the meeting was to be no less than Moshe Sneh, ex-chief of the Haganah and reputed exponent of an "Eastern" (pro-Russian) orientation in Zionism, and also featured was Leo Isacson—American Labor party congressman from the Bronx who, last February, had won a sensational victory (only to lose ignominiously in the recent elections) and had recently made a trip to Palestine.

Helping the easy jumper to conclusions was the known fact that a week later Dr. Sneh was to speak at an "Israel Independence Dinner" sponsored by the American Committee of Jewish Writers, Artists, and Scientists, at which the Ambassadors of Poland and Czechoslovakia, and Albert C. Kahn, were to speak, and which was with-

IN ITS third appearance, this new department, devoted to informal comment on cultural and social events and trends, presents a report by NATHAN GLAZER on a mass meeting recently run by one of the lesser-known, though significant, Zionist parties; and a discussion by ALFRED WERNER of *The Trial*, a film recently made by the famous director G. W. Pabst in Vienna, and based on a ritual murder trial in Hungary in the 1880's. Not yet released in this country, the film has already aroused wide comment and controversy in Europe. Nathan Glazer is an assistant editor of COMMENTARY. Mr. Werner's reports on the cultural and literary scene in Central Europe have appeared recently in the *New York Times Book Review*.

out question being run by at least fellow-travelers.

To be sure, it was well known that neither Hashomer Hatzair nor the Progressive Zionist League had ever been Communist fronts. Hashomer Hatzair is the American branch of a world-wide youth organization which recruits young Jews for pioneering and collective living in Palestinian agricultural communes.

In Palestine, Hashomer Hatzair had been an independent political party, made up almost entirely of collective colonies, and emphasizing socialist principles in general and Arab-Jewish cooperation and a bi-national state in Palestine in particular. As such, it had for many years been identified with the "moderate" wing of Zionism—with those elements, from the Ihud to Chaim Weizmann, who did not demand a Jewish state in *all* of Palestine.

HOWEVER, not long ago, Hashomer Hatzair in Palestine had merged with another socialist group—a split-off from the majority labor party, Mapai—which had vigorously supported a Jewish state in all of Palestine. Hashomer Hatzair completely abandoned its bi-national line, and even stopped talking, in anything more than a whisper, about the need for Arab-Jewish cooperation.

More serious, the new joint group, the United Workers party (Mapam), plumped for an "Eastern orientation" for Israel, and attacked England and America. If Mapam was really Stalinist, this was most ominous: it would mark the first time the Communists had achieved any influence in Palestine, where their dogmatic anti-Zionism had insured that they would remain a rather anomalous sect.

This meeting, it took little research to find out, was actually the American debut of Mapam, and it seemed likely that it could throw some light on the extent of the infiltration of Communist thinking and per-

sonnel into a rather large and important Palestinian party. This writer had known many members of Hashomer Hatzair; some were now in kibbutzim in Palestine, more were now ex-members, and the meeting seemed a good opportunity to find out just what was happening.

AT THE subway exit at 66th Street, one expected to find a mob, but there was only a shy young Shomer who asked if I wanted the Arena, and pointed it out to me behind a big "Bowling" sign. Last November 29, the Labor Zionists had run a meeting here, and the streets had been packed with thousands celebrating the partition decision. Tonight's calm was a reminder that, regardless of the "temper of the masses," it is no simple matter to run a big meeting: and despite the sizable newspaper announcements, only little Hashomer Hatzair was behind this meeting.

The meeting began an hour late, and the hall was not quite full—there were perhaps a thousand: but even this created difficulties, since the singing of the enthusiastic Shomrim was lost in this crowd of largely middle-aged people, and even when someone tried to encourage mass singing from the stage with the aid of a public-address system, the response was very weak.

The chairman's opening words were: "Chaverim, friends, fellow-Zionists, fellow progressives." He went on to say, "We are going to present speakers who represent progressive forces in Jewish life in Israel and the United States," and ended with the assertion that Israel would be built "as a bastion of progressive democracy." He then introduced the president of the Progressive Zionist League, who ended the unbearable tension about whether we were talking about progressives or Progressives (Wallaceite persuasion) by telling us that the Progressive Zionist League had, after a referendum of its membership, decided some months before to affiliate with Wallace's Progressive party.

Now the Progressive Zionist League, formed a few years ago as an adult affiliate of Hashomer Hatzair not pledged to *halutzit* (personal participation in pioneering in Palestine), picked its name long before there was any hint that Wallace would form a third party, let alone a "Progressive"

party. Yet this accident may have had some influence in making Progressives out of the progressives in the Progressive Zionist League. Shomrim have always had a slightly magical attitude toward language in general and a suspicious attitude toward English in particular. In speech and writing, they hasten to substitute Hebrew equivalents for English terms as soon as possible, having "sichot" instead of discussions, going to "moshava" instead of camp, and writing to the "lishka" instead of the office. One wondered whether, if Henry Wallace had been successful in getting his party called the New party, he might not thereby have forfeited the support of the Progressive Zionist League.

The next speaker, a young girl who will probably be in Palestine in a year or two, spoke of youth desirous of self-realization, of escaping the need to live off "profits made from the slave class"; she told of youth in Palestine today, "with a book in one hand, a hoe in the other," now unfortunately dropped for a rifle; she asked rhetorically whether "the city-dweller, the pale clerk" would arise again in Palestine. She spoke with sincerity and emotion, and in the flowery and sentimental style that is the bane of Hashomer Hatzair writing, and which I am sure has been no help in its efforts at a clear and consistent political line. She spoke in an earlier, bucolic Hashomer Hatzair tradition, expressing dislike of the city—Shomrim neither smoke nor drink, and the girl members use no cosmetics and pay a determined lack of attention to their appearance. She emphasized the passionate involvement with Aretz ("The Land"), rather than the newer link with "progressive forces."

But this pastoral mood was swiftly broken by Congressman Isacson.

He began softly, hoarsely, and apologetically: "I'm sorry if you can't hear too well in back," he said, "but I've been on the sound trucks for a month." But before we knew it he was shouting and straining at the top of his lungs. Israel was being betrayed; and this was "the worst of all betrayals. I speak of course of that infamous perfidy known as the 'Bernadotty' plan, which would deprive Israel of two-thirds of its territory. I charge that that plan was not written by Bernadotty, but it is the

plan of the American State Department working in cooperation with the cohorts of Bevin!" Cheers and applause. Congressman Isacson then calmed down just a bit and said that when he was in Palestine he had told "Bernadotty" that the Jews were entitled to all of Palestine. Partition however, "was at least a final plan. But Bernadotty was not there to enforce partition! He was there to partition partition! He was there as the agent of the American oil interests who are now trying to destroy Israel!" This last charge was not applauded. Congressman Isacson apparently forgot that, however close the outward appearance, he was not talking to a Stalinist audience, and the defamation of a murdered man as an "agent" was not considered fair game among them even when carried out by so magnificent an orator as Congressman Isacson.

After a brief lyrical interlude about his visit to Mishmar Ha-emek, a Hashomer Hatzair collective which had made a heroic stand against the Arabs, Congressman Isacson wound up for a sensational close: "I have tonight called on the President of the United States to call Congress into special session to investigate the maneuvers behind the Bernadotty Plan." This got tremendous applause, and, riding high, he concluded: "We must understand that in the Marshall plan of sixteen billion dollars, four and a half billion are set aside for the purchase of Middle Eastern oil, oil equipment, oil tankers, and so on. Think of it! Four and a half billion dollars! That is why the embargo still remains on Israel! That is why Israel is not recognized!" The line of argument was obscure, but Congressman Isacson spoke triumphantly, as if the figure of four and a half billion was decisive proof for anything, and the audience, by its wild response, showed it was convinced.

DR. SNEH had walked onto the stage just before Isacson spoke; a short, stocky figure, with a cigarette held in a cigarette-holder, he looked much like the Hollywood image of the Russian Commissar, and during Isacson's speech he leaned back in his chair with an expression of detached amusement. The chairman, at 10:30, was obviously preparing to make an appeal for funds, when the audience demanded "Sneh, Sneh!" Somewhat embarrassed and making

a point of his accession to democratic pressure, the chairman then introduced Dr. Sneh, saying he would speak in two languages: "Yiddish and . . ."—there was an interrogative silence. And while scattered voices cried out for "Ivrit" (Hebrew), Dr. Sneh told the chairman decisively he would speak only in Yiddish.

The English speech that had been mimeographed for the press gave no hint of Dr. Sneh's style. He spoke—almost barked—in short, pithy, sarcastic sentences. By his constant references to the "nine" (in the Security Council) and his detailed review of how Israel had been treated by the Anglo-American bloc in the UN, he made it clear that his allegiance to progressive forces rested fairly directly on the fact that Russia and her satellites had supported the Jewish case in the UN and sent arms to the Jews. "For seven months we stood alone. The Arabs in Palestine attacked us. The seven Arab states attacked us. Behind them was all the power of the British empire. But to the nine this was no threat to peace. Only when we took Haifa; when we took Jaffa; when we defended Jerusalem against the Arab Legion and its British officers; when we had shown we could defeat the armies of seven states supported by a great Empire: then there was a threat to peace. Then the nine said, 'look, here is a terrible threat to peace.'" This was the tenor and style of Dr. Sneh's address.

Dr. Sneh was the only speaker of the evening who did not speak vaguely of unity with "world progressive forces"—a vagueness which could conceal one knew not what degree of allegiance to the Soviet Union. Dr. Sneh spoke rather of the concrete political demands of the Jewish state; of the concrete obstacles that had been placed in the way of its demands by England and America; and of the concrete aid that had been offered by Russia and her satellites. The problems of the "progressive forces" in the rest of the world received a nod, but it was absolutely clear that Dr. Sneh was moved by the needs of the Jews of Palestine, as he conceived them, and in a different world political situation might be found on the side of a different great power. An outside observer could have deduced from his speech that the "Eastern orientation" of Mapam and Hashomer Hatzair, though it

had a sizable component of naivety and sentimentality, was a limited one: when and if Russia stopped supporting the Jews and started supporting the Arabs, the Eastern orientation would disappear.

And, indeed, looking at the Shomrim there that night, with their blue scout shirts and colored ties, one could feel one was not dealing with Stalinized youth: they did not have the peculiar kind of intensity and rah-rah Americanism (I mean in culture, not ideology) that has characterized American Stalinist youth groups for the past ten years. One could never imagine them adapting popular dance tunes into political ballads. It was revealing that the bar on the corner was completely empty after the meeting: the Shomrim, and many of them are in the early twenties, were getting up *horas* in the street. And when the next night, after a Wallace youth meeting at the St. Nicholas Arena, the young Wallaceites stopped traffic in Times Square, one could see that this was a very different group from the young Shomrim, who were probably having serious "sichot" in their "kens" ("nests") that night.

The Progressive Zionist League is a different matter. Since it does not make the demand of *halutziut*, it is easier to "infiltrate," and perhaps this has already happened; in which case it is hitched to the Stalinist wagon for good. Even Dr. Sneh himself is a somewhat different matter. He looks and acts differently from the Hashomer Hatzair leaders who have been in the movement all their lives, and in a kibbutz twenty years. Dr. Sneh was first a General Zionist, and only went to the Mapam—not the Hashomer Hatzair—very recently, and on political grounds rather than out of a desire to participate personally in the upbuilding of Palestine, which is the way most Shomrim have come. About him I am not sure, and since he is primarily a political man rather than a halutz, he may yet become the Fierlinger of Palestine.

SHOMRIM have always been isolated from whatever influences American culture might bring to bear on them: they dance *horas* instead of fox-trots, and go to "sichot" instead of movies. Together with fox-trots and movies, they have also missed the rather special sophistication that American leftists of many types have developed about Stalin-

ism: they are as backward about Russia as, say, Jean-Paul Sartre was two years ago, or many European workers are today. And the same has always been true, in a way, of the Palestinian Shomrim. Intensely nationalist, they were inevitably out of the main stream of leftist political thought in the past thirty years. And the fact that they lived in small rural communities further isolated them. Hopefully, it is likely that, under Anglo-American protection, their education in Stalinism will now be allowed to proceed without any such drastic interruption as has occurred in Czechoslovakia.

Very much involved in the details of making the collective colony a going concern, Hashomer Hatzair has not had too much time to worry about the rest of the world, and has remained satisfied with a general radical socialism of roughly the pre-1914 Kautsky variety. The Shomrim have never come to the point of questioning the desirability of collectivism and nationalization as a general principle of universal applicability. After all, no one has ever been executed in a kibbutz for "anti-social behavior"—at worst, he's thrown out.

But when all society is one great kibbutz, the matter becomes much more complicated: or, to recall the Marxist dialectic, a change of quantity becomes a change of quality. Surreptitiously thinking of Russia as the one great kibbutz—unfortunately anti-Zionist—the Shomrim saw no reason why they should not jump eagerly on the Soviet bandwagon once Russia shifted to support of the Jews.

But nationalism is stronger than ideology, and many observers already detect straws in the wind pointing to another shift in the Communist line on Palestine. And then, one suspects, like the demands for a bi-national Palestine and Jewish-Arab working-class cooperation which disappeared after last November 29, the "Eastern orientation" will disappear in Palestine.

Austria's Anti-Bigotry Film

ALFRED WERNER

THE factual background of the new Austrian film—*The Trial: In the Name of Humanity*—is the story of a sickly and neurotic peasant girl named Eszter Solymosi,

fourteen years old, who on April 1, 1882 disappeared from the small village of Tisza Eszlar in Hungary. This happened a few days before Passover, and the girl's mother, believing that Jews murder Christians to use their blood in the preparation of matzoth, accused Jozsef Scharf, the local Jewish sexton, of ritual murder.

The villagers themselves were not hostilely inclined towards their Jewish fellow-townsmen, and the ensuing storm would quickly have subsided if it had not been stirred up from the outside. Unscrupulous Hungarian politicians, led by Baron Geza von Onody, a parliamentary representative of the small but vociferous and vicious Freedom party, exploited the incident in order to "pacify" the economically oppressed Hungarian masses. Onody and his tool, District Attorney Bary, tortured Scharf's 13-year-old son, Moric, until the exhausted boy said he had looked through the key-hole and seen his father and several other Jews slaughtering Eszter. Even after Eszter's unmarred body had been found in the Tisza River, the court in Nyiregyhaza continued proceedings against a large number of Tisza Eszlar Jews, who were held in custody and subjected to all kinds of tortures and humiliations. While the trial itself was conducted in an illegal and most brutal manner, Onody and his party instigated bloody anti-Semitic riots in various Hungarian cities.

Hungarian liberals reacted very strongly, and one of their leaders, the lawyer and member of parliament, Karoly Eotvoes, undertook to defend the Jews. Defying threats and attacks, he succeeded in winning their acquittal. After a fourteen-months' trial, during which both the defendants and their families suffered horribly from the hands of the mob, the Tisza Eszlar Jews were freed. The end of the trial was a decisive defeat for the Freedom party, and the verdict was hailed by liberals everywhere as a victory of humanity and justice over a combination of medieval superstition and modern demagoguery.

THE TRIAL is the second dramatization of this "Hungarian Dreyfus Case"; three decades ago, when pogroms took place in Southern Russia, Arnold Zweig used the Tisza Eszlar case as the basis for a play, *Die Sendung Semaels*.

The present film, made at Vienna's "Little Hollywood," the suburban Rosenhügel studio, is postwar Austria's first and only serious contribution to the combatting of the racial hatred which has reduced Vienna's Jewish population to one-twentieth of its previous size. It stands as an isolated work of serious film art among the typical Viennese confections, with their seductive countesses, amorous lieutenants, and Strauss waltzes.

The world premiere of *The Trial* took place last March in Zurich, and the distributors plan to show it to American audiences in the early part of 1949. Wherever the film has been seen so far, it has aroused controversies on two points: first, the advisability of releasing it at this time ("let sleeping dogs lie"); second, the accuracy of its treatment of the historical facts.

The makers of the film, Huebner-Kahla-Produktion, spared neither time nor money in its production. Rudolf Brunngraber, one of the three men who collaborated in writing the screenplay, is a well-known novelist. Emeric Roboz, another of the writers, is a Hungarian Jew who, as an editor of the daily *Pesti Eset*, in the 20's, attacked the Horthy regime and the "Awakening Magyars" (heirs of Onody's Freedom party) and eventually paid for his courage by spending several years in prison. In 1932 he published a two-volume novel on the Tisza Eszlar case, the fruit of intensive study. Brunngraber, too, has written a novel on the case, *Prozess auf Tod und Leben*, published last spring.

Georg Wilhelm Pabst, who directed *The Trial*, is one of Germany's greatest filmmakers, and was a leading figure in the flowering of the German film that took place under the Weimar Republic. Among his most famous productions are the challengingly pacifist *Westfront 1918* and *Kameradschaft*. Pabst left Germany in 1933, and his films were banned in that country as "defeatist" and "bolshevist"; but he returned to Germany at the outbreak of the war and made several films under the Nazi regime.

Two of the stars of the film, Ewald Balser (Dr. Eotvoes) and Maria Eis (the mother of Eszter), have been the shining lights of Vienna's famous Burgtheater. Ernst Deutsch (sextion Scharf) worked under Reinhardt in Berlin; then, being a Jew, fled to Austria, to England, and finally to America; recently

he played at the Salzburg Festivals in Hofmannsthal's version of *Everyman*. The other roles are also played by competent artists, nearly all of them non-Jews with the important exception of Ladislaus Morgenstern, formerly a basso at the Budapest Opera and currently cantor in a Vienna synagogue, who plays the part of the *shohet* Salomon Schwarz and also served as expert on Jewish rituals in the making of the film.

THE cross-fire of criticism to which *The Trial* has been subjected since its release comes from many directions. One Austrian province refused to permit its showing, for reasons hardly of a philo-Semitic nature, while certain Hungarian circles have objected to it because it unearths an episode in Hungarian history they would prefer to have forgotten. The elders of the Vienna Israelitische Kultusgemeinde asked that it be banned because of a tinge of unconscious anti-Semitism which they felt could be detected in the film. Even Mr. Roboz, one of the writers of the screen-play, claimed that the film suffered from various misinterpretations of historical facts for which he was not responsible; and surviving members of the Scharf family have objected to the distortion of the character of the boy Moric Scharf.

It can be admitted, certainly, that the film does not entirely adhere to the historical truth. For one thing, the Jews of Tisza Eszlar in 1882 were not strange and fantastical ghetto-dwellers, wearing long beards and caftans, but were what one might call "assimilated" Jews, looking and behaving more or less like their Christian neighbors. Secondly, the villagers themselves were not anti-Semitic rowdies; they did not burn the local synagogue and they were not elated by the trial, which was conducted in another town. And the real Moric Scharf was not the impudent brat depicted in this film, antagonistic to Judaism and loathing his family, but an obedient and well-behaved boy who fell victim to the brutalities of his persecutors. (As an adult, Moric Scharf moved to Amsterdam, where, a pious and respected Jew, he earned a living as a diamond-cutter, and in his old age witnessed the influx of German-Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany.)

It may further be charged that the movie-

makers have failed to demonstrate sufficiently and persuasively the close connection between anti-Semitism and social injustice, to show the Jew's role as a scapegoat in times of economic and political upheavals. Nor is the movie quite satisfactory from the psychological viewpoint. Instead of exposing anti-Semitism's deeper roots, the film places emphasis exclusively on the conspiratorial aspects of anti-Semitism, on atrocities and physical violence, the burning of synagogues, the forceful arrest and deportation of the village Jews, wild speech-making, riots in the streets and in the court, etc. Finally, one may point out that the Austrian movie-makers displayed less courage and perhaps also less sincerity than the producers of the recent German film *Marriage in the Shadows* (currently showing in this country): where the German writers and artists have boldly and honestly revived the memory of yesterday's grim world—of German persecution of "non-Aryans"—their Viennese colleagues have taken a story of the remote 80's, and the locale is not Vienna, scene of many notorious pogroms, but a faraway region in Hungary. True, the Viennese movie puts fervent pleas for humanity in the mouth of Dr. Eoetvoes, but the setting of *The Trial* nevertheless offers, to those who want it, an easy escape: "They—not we." (Or, worse yet: "They too. . . .")

MANY liberals, on the other hand, have rallied to the support of the movie-makers. If Pabst chose to make the Jews appear more "exotic" than they actually were, then, his supporters argue, he may have done so in order to emphasize the dramatic conflict between Gentile and Jew, and thus to drive home the lesson of his film more sharply. He may have felt, also, that in order to challenge such Nazi films as the fiendish *Jud Suess* (still haunting the memory of many a Central European), he had to resort to the same "*deutliche Sprache*," the same black-and-white technique, but with the tables turned. It has even been suggested that some of the Jewish critics who condemned *The Trial* did so out of a complex feeling of Jewish insecurity and self-hatred that made them uncomfortable at sight of the bearded, gesticulating, "ugly" Jews on the screen.

In any event, if one may judge a film by the effect it has on audiences, the producers

of *The Trial* seem to have the better of their critics, at this writing. Not once have its audiences reacted in any overt anti-Semitic manner, as had been feared by well-meaning but over-cautious educators and city fathers. I happened to see the movie at a little cinema in the Wohlmüt Street, Leopoldstadt, in the heart of what was once the "ghetto" of Vienna. This section is today almost completely non-Jewish, and the men and women who crowded the old-fashioned movie house were, for the most part, typical Viennese, proletarian or petit bourgeois. During the showing they were so silent that one could hear the slightest movement. After the show I saw many of the women wipe tears from their eyes. Voices were subdued, and the people moved into the dark street silently and with expressions of guilt and shame. Did they remember their Jewish neighbors scrubbing streets under SA supervision, the burning of synagogues

on the "Black Thursday" of November 10, 1938, the mass deportations of Austrian Jews after the start of World War II?

It remains to be seen how this Austrian film will be received in the United States, where no such events have occurred, and where anti-Semitism is chiefly confined to the patterns dealt with in *Gentleman's Agreement*. For all its faults, *The Trial* seems to this writer to avoid the grosser errors of so many efforts to combat anti-Semitism. Most important, it shows anti-Semitism to be bad not only for Jews, but for all men. Dr. Eoetvoes—superbly played by Balser in a style reminiscent of Paul Muni's Zola—sternly explains to his bride-to-be: "I did not accept the defense of these people because they are Jews, but because I am a Christian. For there are keys that can be put into many a key-hole, but the key of falsehood never fits into the key-hole of justice."

SOMETIMES I DREAM

NUCHIM BOMSE

Sometimes I dream: I am a child,
My white shirt is flapping wild
And all the grownups laugh.

I run ashamed through streets I do not know,
The wind picks my shirt up from below
And all the grownups laugh.

They lead me all around the town,
The shouting inside me dies down
And all the grownups laugh.

They strip the shirt off my back,
My bareness burns on their eyes' rack

And all the grownups laugh.

And suddenly see: a wondrous sight—
I am old—my beard is white—
And all the children laugh.

They lead me through a tangled maze,
My dead parents come to meet me on the
way
And all the children laugh.

I stand alone in the blue night
With my tears and my cry
And all the children laugh.

NUCHIM BOMSE has published four volumes of lyric poetry in Yiddish and one volume of translations. He was born in Sassow, Galicia, in 1906, and now lives in Paris, where he is literary editor of the Yiddish periodical *Kiyum*. This poem has been translated by Jacob Sloan.

THE STUDY OF MAN

THE REDISCOVERY OF CIVILIZATIONS

Digging for Buried History

WILLIAM F. ALBRIGHT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL undertakings come into being in as many different ways as there are archaeologists and expeditions. But all, including Biblical archaeology, share one common feature—the call of the unknown, the lure of uncharted country. It was this that attracted a young English lad named Flinders Petrie, who was to organize and direct nearly a hundred archaeological expeditions in a career of two-thirds of a century, ending in Palestine. This was the vision which led a

IN RECENT decades, a series of archaeological discoveries in the Near East has gradually been uncovering a picture of the ancient history of that area which holds important implications for our conceptions of world history and of the roles of various ancient peoples, among them the Jews, in the development of civilization. WILLIAM F. ALBRIGHT, professor of Semitic languages at Johns Hopkins University, who has been a leading figure in the archaeological study of the Near East, here describes the most recent achievements in this field. Professor Albright's own work, mostly centering on Palestine, has done much to re-establish the significance of the Hebrew Bible as a historical source; among other achievements, he has identified the sites of Sodom and Gomorrah and demonstrated that they had been destroyed by a natural cataclysm. This past winter, on an expedition to the peninsula of Sinai, he succeeded in deciphering a group of inscriptions, written in the earliest known variant of the alphabet, which had resisted all efforts at a full interpretation for thirty-three years. Professor Albright is the author of *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible, From the Stone Age to Christianity, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, and other books and articles. He was born in Chile, the son of a Methodist minister, in 1891.

country boy from Illinois, James Henry Breasted, into the study of Egyptology; this same vision enabled him to fire men like John D. Rockefeller Jr. with his own enthusiasm and to found the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, which at one time in the 30's had a score of major archaeological projects under way.

To such adventurous expeditions we owe much of the extension and transformation that has been wrought, during little more than a century, in man's sense of his own history. We hardly realize that in the early 19th century nothing was known about the origin or early development of our Western civilization, which arose from the ancient Near East. The Hebrew Bible then stood practically alone as a source of information for the pre-Hellenic world, with virtually no external sources of information. It was impossible to confirm or to illustrate its contents, much less set it in its historical background and environment. Around 1821, the first steps were taken to recover the great ancient cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia with their amazing artistic achievements, which now adorn most of the great museums of Europe and America. Since then the artist and the historian, the anthropologist and the student of religion have vied with one another to help recover this historic past which had vanished almost completely from the memory of man.

Through the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, archaeological research gained momentum, and when the First World War brought a sudden end to field work, the enforced breathing spell gave a chance for systematizers and interpreters to catch up with the influx of new data. Between the wars there was an unexampled acceleration of archaeo-

logical exploration and excavation in Bible lands, with vastly improved field technique and scientific method. When the Second World War again put a complete stop to all field activity we were again given an interim period for the assimilation of results and for useful stocktaking.

IN THE world of learning, the greatest contrast between 1921 and 1948, three years after the close of each war, is the shift of free intellectual enterprise in the humanities from Central Europe to America, and from Western Europe to the Near and Middle East. Germany and surrounding regions will scarcely be able to take part actively in such studies as Biblical archaeology for a long time to come, though there are still some German scholars who received their training before Hitler's advent and continue research as best they can. Within the Soviet orbit significant research in the humanities is rapidly stagnating, just as has already happened in Russia itself. With entire areas of the humanities, such as free historical and philosophical research, banned, even such studies as Slavonic philology are at present almost totally without representatives whose names carry weight in Western scholarly circles. How much more is this true of Biblical archaeology, which is so remote from the immediate intellectual demands of Marxism!

On the other hand, America, thanks to the spirit of free intellectual enterprise and the great influx of well-trained refugee scholars, is developing rapidly to fill the vacuum left by the collapse of Central European culture. It is even more important that natives of the Middle East are themselves now taking a major part in excavation and exploration, particularly in Egypt, Palestine, Turkey, Iraq, and Syria-Lebanon. Egypt came first, with many men trained abroad in Egyptology and related fields, and with a considerable number of archaeologists who have learned their craft from foreign excavators. Jewish Palestine came second, and since the early 20's there has been an increasing number of competent specialists in archaeology and related ancient disciplines. Men like E. L. Sukenik, Leo Mayer, B. Maisler, I. Ben Dor, have set a high scholarly level and there is now a group of younger men and women who provide for continuity. The technique of pottery chronology, for instance, needs trained practitioners of every age group in order to prevent loss of one of the most valu-

able aids furnished to the historian by the field archaeologist.

Between the two world wars field archaeology made great progress in technique and interpretation of results. So steady was this advance, under the influence of methods of digging and recording introduced by a great Englishman, Sir Flinders Petrie, and two Americans, G. A. Reisner and C. S. Fisher, that archaeologists began to expect a phase of increasing precision along lines already drawn, without any startling shift in direction. This attitude is proving just as fallacious in archaeology as in physics and genetics. For instance: As a result of investigations begun very recently with the search for the causes of radioactivity in Baltimore sewage, it is now known that carbon isotope 14 is likely to become an aid of the first importance in fixing chronology. This radioactive carbon isotope collects in living plants and ceases to be added after the death of the plant which harbors it. Its life span is said to be some six millennia, and we can accurately measure the point a given mass of radioactive carbon has reached in this span with a mass spectroscope. We may safely expect a land like Egypt, where organic material turns up constantly in excavations of whose date we are sure, to enable us to test the validity of this new chronological clue. Since artifacts of stone, metal, and clay often are found together with organic remains, we may be able to date them with a precision hitherto undreamed of, and know the exact time-relation of cultural events during the last four millennia BCE. With such a prospect in view, the historian can no longer neglect the ancient Orient without dangerous foreshortening of perspective and loss of an invaluable historical source.

OWING largely to the influence of archaeology, there has been during these past two decades an almost unnoticed shift of the historian's center of interest into regions previously disregarded. Thus, over half of Arnold J. Toynbee's twenty-one distinct "societies" are now extinct, and of these no fewer than seven have been brought to light and reconstructed by the archaeologist. The historian who aspires to dominate world history must now perforce become acquainted with archaeology. This is just as true of the anthropologist and the geographer. In research on the Southwest and Middle America there has been increasing

realization of the importance of archaeology, yet the American cultural anthropologist of the functional school has, with notable exceptions, tended to disregard historical and archaeological materials. But recently one may detect among American anthropologists a greater interest in history—and for anthropologists, this means mostly archaeology—as illustrated by the work of such men as Alfred L. Kroeber and Leslie A. White.

The science of geography is replete with examples of the dangerous effects of incorrect archaeology. One of the most striking illustrations was the late Ellsworth Huntington, whose daring theories of the determining role of climate on the development of civilization and of the superiority of the New England Anglo-Saxon stock were based primarily on archaeological data gathered in Turkestan, in Turkey, in Central America, and especially in Palestine. After exploring Palestine for several months in 1909, he published his once famous book, *Palestine and Its Transformation* (1911), maintaining in it, with rich archaeological documentation, that the history of the ancient East must be explained almost exclusively from such geographical factors as climate and rainfall. Scientific archaeological and geographical research since then, and Nelson Glueck's remarkable surface explorations of Transjordan in particular, has proved that the facts are entirely different from what Huntington had supposed. Since Huntington's climatic theory was linked with a theory of the predominating influence on civilization of the Anglo-Saxon stock, the work of Nelson Glueck becomes as important for sound anthropology as the direct attack on racialism made by such anthropologists as Ashley Montagu.

IN SURVEYING the most significant archaeological discoveries of recent years, we cannot limit ourselves exclusively to finds which throw direct light on the Bible. The ultimate value for Biblical studies of new data which clarify the general development of ancient life and thinking is often much greater than that of individual corroborations or corrections of the Bible. Thanks to the almost incredible magnitude of the archaeological discoveries made during the past century and a quarter, the civilizations of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, Asia Minor, Arabia, and the Aegean, entirely unknown—or at best known only from a few fragmentary monuments or

facts transmitted through the Bible and Greco-Roman writers—as late as 1821, have been brought into the full light of history. Scores of scripts and languages, some of which stand in no relationship to any surviving tongues, have been deciphered; many grammars and dictionaries of previously unknown tongues have been written, and elaborate syntheses of different aspects of historical cultures have been constructed on the basis of inscriptions and figured monuments.

We turn first to the three thousand years, roughly from 5000 to 2000 BCE, which preceded the age of the Patriarchs—the age of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was then that the life of the ancient East became stabilized and that the foundations were laid on which the civilization of Israel later arose. Thanks to excavations carried out during the past ten years in Iraq, it has been possible to settle the sequence of cultures in Babylonia and Assyria between the first beginnings of settled village life in the early fifth millennium BCE and the earliest written monuments, toward the end of the fourth. Since 1946 very important excavations have been in progress at Eridu, the ancient holy city south of Ur of the Chaldees, Abraham's home, and during the past winter some ten successive strata of temple construction have been dug there. All of them antedate the middle of the fourth millennium and show that Mesopotamian civilization then had already assumed the basic forms which it was to exhibit for over three thousand years.

In Egypt, new discoveries and publication of earlier finds have since 1938 virtually revolutionized our knowledge of the first dynasties, following the unification of Egypt under Menes at the beginning of the third millennium. Objects from the First Dynasty prove that the art of this period had reached an astonishingly high level of beauty (according to our dominant post-Hellenic standards) and technical skill. By that time the busy hands and minds of sedentary man had discovered or devised tens of thousands of independent processes and techniques in scores of arts and crafts. When we bear in mind the fact that writing had not yet become a significant instrument for transmission of such knowledge, the inventive capacity of our precursors, more than five thousand years ago, appears in its true light. In comparison with their achievements, the triumphs of modern technology, aided by all the tools now provided by science and trans-

mitted by every conceivable visual and auditory aid, do not seem quite so unique.

Nor has archaeology been stagnant in Palestine, though the disorders of 1936-1939 and the Second World War enormously slowed progress. Since the end of the war two very instructive digs have been initiated and carried out, one by Stekelis, Maisler, and Avi-Yonah at the great site of Beth-yerah (modern Khirbet Kerak) at the southwestern corner of the Sea of Galilee, the other by Roland de Vaux at the large mound of Tell el-Far'ah, perhaps the Tirzah of early Israelite history. These two excavations have definitely settled the succession of cultural phases in Palestine from about 3500 to about 2400 BCE. In those ages there were already flourishing towns and fortresses in Palestine, though there were frequent invasions and no city could hope to escape destruction under the most favorable conditions for more than two or three centuries.

In 1940 M. Georges Posener, an able young Jewish Egyptologist (since appointed professor of Egyptology at the Collège de France), published a very important group of hieratic Egyptian inscriptions on clay statuettes representing Asiatic prisoners. These documents carry us forward to early patriarchal Palestine, about 1800 BCE, and they give us the names of scores of tribes and towns, with their chieftains. Combined with some similar material which had been previously published and with the results of excavations in Palestine, they give us a clear historical picture of an age which seemed only a generation ago to be doomed to perpetual obscurity.

But the most important materials for the recovery of the history of Palestine and Syria during the age of the Patriarchs and Moses, it seems likely, will come from André Parrot's sensational discovery of the great palace of the Amorite kings of Mari, on the Middle Euphrates, with some twenty thousand cuneiform tablets dating from the very heart of the Patriarchal Age, about 1750-1695 BCE. After several years of feverish study of these priceless archives, the war came and the tablets were removed to safer places for the duration. Three volumes of cuneiform texts have already been published. Since these documents swarm with personal names and other indications of the close linguistic and cultural kinship of the population of Mari to the Hebrews of Genesis, we await further publication and analysis of their contents with the greatest impatience.

NINETEEN years ago a remarkable discovery was made by French archaeologists on the coast of northern Syria. In 1929 C. F. A. Schaeffer and his colleagues, excavating the site of Ras Shamrah opposite the island of Cyprus, discovered clay tablets inscribed in a new cuneiform alphabet. Though previously quite unknown, this new script was deciphered within a few weeks of its first publication.

Hundreds of new documents were uncovered in the ten years following, nearly all of which have since been published. The most remarkable of them was a group of mythological epics and religious texts, dating from the beginning of the 14th century BCE. Their language—Ugaritic—is substantially identical with that of contemporary Canaan (Lebanon and Western Palestine); it thus closely resembles the language which must have been spoken by Moses a few generations later. The chief difference between it and Biblical Hebrew lies in its archaic flavor when compared to the classical language of pre-exilic Hebrew prose. On the other hand, there are astonishingly close parallels between Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry, especially the poems of early Israel.

In Psalm 92:10, for example, we read:

*For behold, thine enemies, O Lord,
For behold, thine enemies shall perish;
All doers of iniquity shall be scattered!*

This appears in a Ugaritic episode of the combat of Baal with the sea dragon as:

*Behold, thine enemies, O Baal
Behold, thine enemies shalt thou smite,
Behold, thou shalt destroy thy foes!*

It will be noticed that the prosodic style is the same: three closely joined verse units of three word accents each; poetic parallelism modified by being distributed over three verse units instead of two, with a strong tendency to repeat words at the beginning of each unit. But there is an equally striking difference in the content of the two passages, besides the fact that the older Canaanite praises the storm-god Baal, head of a whole pantheon of deities, while the Hebrew psalm praises Yahweh, the only deity: in the third verse unit we find "doers of iniquity" substituted for "foes," a verbal alteration which implies that men who do evil become automatically enemies of God, regardless of other considerations. This is not

only a pronounced ethical advance over Canaanite mythology, but it illustrates the weakness of Mowinckel's theory that the "doers of evil" mentioned so often in the Psalter are to be understood in the restricted sense of "magicians."

Two generations ago critical scholars of the Bible did not believe that any system of writing was employed by the Semites of Palestine and adjacent districts as early as the age of Moses. Then in 1887 came the discovery of the Amarna Tablets, a collection of letters written to the King of Egypt from Canaan, followed by additional tablets from various mounds of Palestine. These documents proved that Canaanite scribes learned both the complicated Babylonian cuneiform script and the Babylonian (Accadian) language in order to carry on correspondence as well as to keep accounts and record important business transactions. Some of the letters are written in virtually pure Canaanite, with Babylonian words inserted occasionally. All the Babylonian tablets so far found in Palestine date from between 1500 and 1300 BCE, but tablets from the 18th century BCE have already been excavated in Syria. After the Israelite invasion of Canaan, cuneiform disappeared from the country for centuries until it was brought back by Assyrian administrators in the seventh century BCE.

The Babylonian cuneiform system of writing was anything but easy for the Canaanite youth to master. In the first place he had to learn at least three hundred different characters, each one consisting of more or less complicated arrangements of wedges. Each of the characters might be either phonetic or ideographic, or it might be both; it might also possess several different phonetic values. Then the youth had to learn the Babylonian language, as different from Canaanite as French is from Spanish today, and acquire a smattering of Sumerian (the non-Semitic tongue of academic Babylonia), including many words and sign-groups or formulas. We can scarcely be surprised, then, to find ingenious Canaanites inventing new and simpler scripts in order to write their own tongues.

The first script to be invented, as far as we yet know, seems to have been the so-called enigmatic script of Byblus, first discovered on a stone slab which Maurice Dunand published in 1930. Dunand discovered ten additional

inscriptions of the same type on stone and copper, which he published in 1945. Recently Edouard Dhorme has tried to decipher this new script, assuming with reason that the language must be an early form of Canaanite-Phoenician. But since there are some 114 different characters on the few known inscriptions and the entire number must have been at least 150, it is very questionable whether Dhorme's impressive effort to read them is correct. This script was apparently in use from before 1800 down to after 1400 BCE; it was also employed by Semites in Egypt, as J. Leibovitch will soon demonstrate. However, it was too complex to stand its ground indefinitely or even to compete effectively with Babylonian cuneiform, and it was soon displaced by two consonantal alphabets.

THE first of these two consonantal alphabets was invented by the southern Canaanites, who were under strong Egyptian influence. Our knowledge of these alphabetic beginnings comes mainly from about thirty stone inscriptions found near the Egyptian turquoise mines at Serabit el-Khadem in southern Sinai. The first of them were discovered by Sir Flinders Petrie in 1905, and others have been added by the members of three Harvard and one Finnish expedition since that time.

During the writer's visit to Egypt and Sinai this past winter he was able to study Serabit and its inscriptions, establishing a date for them in the 15th century BCE and working out a new decipherment. This decipherment is based on the brilliant discovery by Sir Alan Gardiner in 1915 that a number of the signs in this script could be plausibly identified with Hebrew letters by applying the acrophonic principle. In applying this principle, he noted a succession of signs which looked like objects (house-eye—"ox-goad"—cross) and gave each of them the value of the initial consonant of the Hebrew name of the object in question (which in these four cases was luckily also preserved as the Hebrew-Phoenician-Greek name of the letter): b(eth) — (ayin) — l(amed) — t(au) = B't, "Baalath," the name of the lady of the gods in Canaanite polytheism.

Subsequent efforts to carry Gardiner's decipherment further were almost total failures, because of the shortness of the inscriptions, and because the tentative dating of the fragments and interpretation of their purpose were incorrect, but especially because of our ignor-

ance of the Canaanite language then spoken. Today, employing our new, greatly increased knowledge of the speech of Palestine and Syria in that period, it is not difficult to go ahead with the decipherment and to reach a point where we can propose reasonable translations of most of the inscriptions. Since these translations are not only in accord with the kind of thing we should expect at that time and place, but also yield a vocabulary and grammar which are absolutely normal for Northwest Semitic of the age in question, they offer a solid basis on which to proceed, though we badly need more documents. Excavation of all the turquoise mines at Serabit would unquestionably bring more to light.

At present our oldest completely intelligible inscriptions in this ancestral alphabet of ours come from Byblus (Hebrew Gebal) in Phoenicia and may be conservatively dated about 1000 BCE. Before this there are various groups of fragments, the earliest of which go back to between 1700 and 1550 BCE. Our ancestral alphabet was thus invented before the 16th century BCE by some Canaanite who imitated the forms of Egyptian hieroglyphs (but not their meaning), and devised the acrophonic system of consonantal values, again in imitation of a group of Egyptian uniconsonantal hieroglyphs.

Finally, in northern Canaan another inventive genius devised a consonantal alphabet composed of some twenty-nine simple arrangements of cuneiform wedges—the Ugaritic alphabet that we have already encountered. Two inscriptions in this alphabet have been discovered in Palestine in recent years; both show peculiar forms of several letters and run from right to left instead of from left to right like Babylonian cuneiform and normal Ugaritic. This alphabet was thus invented not later than the 15th century BCE and was in use until the 13th century, at least.

Thus the day when the age of Moses could be considered illiterate is definitely past. For it is certain that the Western Semites of the time of Moses or shortly before were accustomed to three entirely different native scripts, as well as to Babylonian cuneiform and Egyptian hieroglyphics (which were sparingly used by native scribes to write their own tongue). We can therefore no longer assume as a matter of course that the early parts of the Bible were transmitted orally for hundreds of years before being written down. Of course, it does not

necessarily follow that the Mosaic Torah was written down by Moses in its extant form. That is a question for historical and philological criticism to answer—but to answer with caution and without antecedent prejudice.

UP UNTIL the end of the First World War our knowledge of the chronology of Palestinian archaeology in the Israelite period (that is, in the Iron Age, between the twelfth and the sixth centuries BCE) was unbelievably chaotic. Between 1890 and 1921 there was no systematic excavation and no archaeological specialists who applied their knowledge to each new excavation, improving its chronology by use of its own intrinsic new evidence. Bit by bit since 1921 a solid chronology has been worked out, until we can now date practically any substantial collection of pottery, whole or broken, which belongs to one time (without spreading over too long a period) within half a century. Such sites as Megiddo and Samaria, Debir (Tell Beit Mirsim) and Beth-shemesh, all dug in whole or in part by Americans, have contributed most to the picture which now exists; a number of Palestinian Jewish archaeologists control the relevant pottery chronology very well indeed.

For later Israelite history, under the Judges, the United Monarchy of David and Solomon, and the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, perhaps the most important new finds have been building remains and art objects illustrating the reign of Solomon. There is, of course, scant hope of ever obtaining any direct traces of the Temple itself or of the other royal buildings in Jerusalem, described in Kings and Chronicles, since these structures have more than once been leveled to the native rock. Most striking of all Solomonic remains have been the Megiddo stables for royal chariot-horses, which were much better built than the average better-class residence of the time. At Ezion-geber on the Red Sea, Nelson Glueck excavated part of the royal copper refineries, which also went back to the age of Solomon. These refineries show an unexpectedly high development of metallurgical technique; in fact, though there can be no doubt whatever about the purpose of the complex installations, specialists are still unable to explain just how they were used. It would appear from the evidence of this site that the art of copper refining had developed far beyond what has been commonly supposed by historians of technology.

Our readers may be reminded that research on the lost Egyptian art of sawing granite blocks with copper saws is deadlocked at present, since no means of giving copper or bronze sufficient temper is known, and analyses of ancient Egyptian copper have failed to yield any clue. No trace of anything like a modern copper-beryllium alloy has been found, and it is exceedingly improbable that beryllium could have been known to the Egyptians. Nor is there any trace of true steel, which could also be used to cut granite, before the first century CE, when it is found at Pompeii.

The late pre-exilic period has been illuminated by many important finds, chief among which are the now well-known ostraca of Lachish—broken shards of pottery covered with letters and memoranda from the time of Jeremiah (beginning of the sixth century BCE). These documents, which number over a score in various states of preservation, are the only extensive body of contemporary writings in classical Hebrew known outside of the Hebrew Bible. They have considerable historical interest for the last days of the First Temple, and an even greater philological significance for the light they throw on Hebrew prose style, grammar, and spelling. While these documents are all in Hebrew, an Aramaic papyrus discovered at Saqqarah near Cairo in 1943 proves to contain a letter from an otherwise unknown Palestinian prince named Adon to some Pharaoh describing the advance of the conquering Babylonian army, perhaps in the year 603 BCE. This new document confirms a natural inference from the statement in II Kings 18:26 (referring to events of 701 BCE) that Aramaic had become the diplomatic language of Palestine before the Exile.

IN ADDITION to the famous Aramaic papyri from Elephantine, most of which were first published in 1911, there are a good many more Aramaic documents from Egypt which are soon to be published. Among them are fourteen leather rolls and fragments containing letters from Arsames, viceroy of the southwestern provinces of the Persian empire about 410 BCE, to officials in Egypt. These letters are of great value for the light they throw on conditions in the Persian Empire at the time of the Elephantine Papyri, as well as for the new evidence they furnish for the early date of the work of the biblical Chronicler. In 1944 eight Aramaic papyri were discovered near Hermopolis in

Middle Egypt; they contain evidence that there was a large Semitic colony there in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Though this colony may have been in large part non-Jewish, the cult of the Queen of Heaven is mentioned in it, thus illustrating the insolent defiance of Jeremiah by the Jewish colonists in Upper Egypt (Jer. 44:15 ff.) and their worship of this goddess. Incidentally, "Queen of Heaven" was apparently the title of the Canaanite goddess Astarte (Ashtaroth) in the Aramaic letter from about 603 BCE which was mentioned above. Several hundred Aramaic ostraca from Elephantine, discovered over forty years ago by Clermont-Ganneau, are soon to be published by Dupont-Sommer; these documents will throw a great deal of fresh light on the Jewish life of the fifth century BCE.

However, all these discoveries are overshadowed by the latest find, made a year ago by simple Bedouins. In a cave near the northern end of the Dead Sea these Arabs discovered some ten large parchment and leather rolls, four of which were purchased by the Syrian monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem, while the rest were bought by the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Since their discovery was reported a few months ago by Professors E. L. Sukenik of the Hebrew University and Millar Burrows of Yale University, the principal facts have become known and preliminary descriptions have just been published. According to Sukenik, who is an eminent authority on the chronology of ancient writing, none of these documents can be later than the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. The present writer has seen photographs of several of the rolls, and after studying them feels certain that at least two of the three rolls in the possession of the Syrian monks cannot be later than the end of the Maccabean period and the accession of Herod the Great (37 BCE). Their script is older than that of the Nash Papyrus, which can be shown to belong to the first century BCE, and it is entirely possible that the new rolls go back in part to the second century BCE. In that case they would be very little, if any, later than the time in which the latest parts of the Hebrew Bible were written. Only future work on the part of many scholars can establish the true dating, with the aid of still unpublished discoveries in Egypt and Syria.

The most striking single roll contains virtually the entire prophecy of Isaiah; it dates a good thousand years before the oldest Hebrew

manuscript of Isaiah previously known. The text is nearly the same as that of the Massoretic Hebrew Bible (the traditional consonantal text of the Bible), but the spelling is very different and there are many new details which will compel some revision of our standard Hebrew grammars.

Other rolls contain portions of Biblical and apocryphal literature, all in Hebrew or Aramaic. It seems that these original Hebrew books resembling the books of the Apocrypha will compel a redating of some of the books already known from the period between the end of the Biblical canon and the age of the Tannaim (the time of the Mishnah). Most surprising in this connection is the discovery of books which appear to belong to a class of Hebrew sectarian literature hitherto illustrated by only one book, the so-called Zadokite document of the "covenant of Damascus," which was discovered by Solomon Schechter in the Cairo Geniza about fifty years ago. Published in 1910, this work has been studied by many scholars, but generally dated much too late. Thus the late R. H. Charles dated it just before the Christian era, while C. C. Torrey places it in the first century CE. The new finds seem to push the original composition of this book back to the early first or even the

second century BCE, in which case the Book of Jubilees, which is quoted by it, must go back a century or two before the late date (toward the end of the first century BCE) which is attributed to it by Torrey.

IT is obvious from these remarks that the new find will revolutionize our knowledge of the development of Jewish cultural and religious history during the Second Temple. The Age of the Maccabees, in particular, is likely to come into its own as one of the really creative periods of Jewish literary history. There has not been such an exciting time in Jewish studies since the first decades of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, over a century ago, before the importance of archaeology could have been realized by anyone.

In these days of crisis there is more need for a stabilizing intellectual life than ever, and this fact would seem to entail closer attention to what one can learn from the age-old experience of man. Only the thinker who knows both past and present and can interpret each in the light of the other can cope *as thinker* with the recurrent problems of mankind. Today more than ever the archaeologist seems warranted in believing that his branch of the humanities has an increasingly great role to play.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Racism in South Africa

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It may seem strange to complain that an article entitled "Racism Comes to Power in South Africa" [by T. C. Robertson, in the November COMMENTARY] is altogether too optimistic in its interpretation of events in that country. Yet this is the case, and the charge extends to the title. For racism has not "come to power" in South Africa; it was firmly seated in power from the first day of the Union's existence, and has steadily gone on to new triumphs, irrespective of which wing of Afrikaner nationalism has been in power. Nor is it a problem which is moving towards a solution, even to the extent that this may be claimed in our own deep South. In that respect the article is eminently useful, as making clear that an already bad situation has now become worse. The non-white population of South Africa is worse oppressed today than it was in the two provinces which were then a part of the British Empire, the Cape and Natal, a half century ago.

Indeed, Afrikaner nationalism has from the beginning centered on the racial issue, and this was crucial throughout its century of struggle against British rule. Whatever one may say against British imperialism in South Africa, it did recognize that the native was a human being entitled to some rights, and—at least on occasion—it introduced policies which sought to give him some role in the government and administration of his own country. The Great Trek which led to the establishment of the two Boer republics was precipitated by such policies in the Cape Colony; the "freedom from British rule" which the Afrikaners sought was in large part freedom to rob, murder, and enslave the native Africans without interference from Whitehall. Again, one of the main issues which led to the Boer War at the turn of the century was the action of the Boer republics in banning the activities of the London Missionary Society because it encouraged the natives to think that they had rights.

If the Boers lost their war against Britain in a military—and perhaps an economic—sense, they won it politically. For the British, as usual ashamed of a victory gained through an un-sportsmanlike advantage of numbers, agreed

that they would restore self-government to the conquered Boers without first granting the suffrage to the natives. Subsequently, they permitted the unification of the two previously British colonies with the former Boer Republics, thereby permitting the Boers, through their defeat, to acquire control of all South Africa. The only vestige of the former British liberal principles which was permitted to enter the constitution of the Union was a provision protecting the suffrage of the Colored inhabitants of the Cape, and even this has been whittled away subsequently.

The differences between Smuts and his Nationalist opponents on the racial question have been similar to those between the "respectable" leaders of Mississippi's Dixiecrats and the late Theodore Bilbo. Indeed, the parallel could be carried further since, like the Dixiecrats, Smuts has been closely tied up with finance capital (largely British—hence his affection for the Commonwealth) while his opponents have represented the same sort of back-country anti-capitalism as did Bilbo. There are, to be sure, liberal elements in the United party, but they form a small minority. That party's electoral propaganda was, in fact, largely devoted to dissociating itself from even the very moderate concessions to liberalism made by Mr. Hofmeyr.

It is perhaps not generally remembered that many of the restrictions on natives—and most of those on South Africa's East Indians—were introduced by governments headed by Smuts. This, of course, does not in any sense exonerate the Nationalists, who have always managed to keep their racism at least slightly more blatant. (In passing, it is worth noting that the Nationalist-Labor coalition, whose record Mr. Robertson praises, was responsible for the passage of the Color Bar Bill, which prohibits the entrance of natives into skilled trades.)

I find it somewhat surprising that, in discussing Nazi influences in South Africa, Mr. Robertson fails to mention the role of Oswald Pirow. After all, Mr. Pirow was more openly and blatantly pro-Nazi than any other major political figure in South Africa—and he carried on his activities from the position of Minister of Defense in the Hertzog-Smuts coalition government. And when, on the outbreak of the war, that coalition broke up, Mr. Pirow's frankly

Nazi New Order party secured a number of seats in Parliament.

It may be that anti-Semitism *per se* was not one of the original elements of Afrikaner nationalism, as Mr. Robertson asserts. But a generalized xenophobia and a strong distaste for traders and financiers certainly were, and both these had a considerable role in preparing the way for a ready acceptance of Nazi doctrines. Whatever the pledges which Dr. Malan has made and may make to South Africa's Jews, his representative at the United Nations, Eric Louw, has urged that they be deprived of citizenship. (Mr. Louw, incidentally, represented the Union in Washington during the Hertzog-Smuts coalition.) To be sure, it may be possible for those Zionist leaders who have approached Dr. Malan for an alliance on a basis of common hatred against Britain to achieve some sort of temporary accommodation. Since even Hitler's anti-Semitism admitted of exceptions, they may perhaps be able to persuade the Nationalists to concede them the status of Honorary Whites. But, if the Nationalists continue in power for any prolonged period, the chances for increased anti-Semitic legislation are considerable. The Malan government is already placing obstacles in the way of Jewish immigration. And even if the United party, in which South Africa's Jews have a role of some importance, should temporarily return to power, the question would still remain of whether Jewish security can be built on participation in the oppression of four-fifths of the country's population.

There seems to be no hope whatsoever, on a basis of past experience, that the dominant white minority in South Africa will ever surrender its position voluntarily. It is therefore all the more important to take note of the methods through which South Africa's non-white population can hope to exert pressure on the Herrenvolk. Probably the most important of these is economic organization. Although it has barred them from skilled occupations, South Africa has permitted its non-whites to secure almost a monopoly on the dirty and difficult tasks, and to furnish a large part of the lower clerical and commercial employes. It has, to be sure, refused their unions legal status and subjected them to various forms of persecution, the latest of which is a prohibition against collection of money by native organizations without government approval. But it has not been able to block their organization altogether. (When the Minister of Labor in the Nationalist-Labor coalition cabinet received a delegation from the native Industrial and Commercial Workers Union, the result was his forced resignation and a split in the Labor party to which he be-

longed.) With the increasing industrialization of South Africa, the possibility of native economic pressure for political ends will increase. Closely related to this is the weapon of passive resistance, so far used mainly by South African Indians. It has from time to time wrung some concessions from the government, and it has recently been resorted to by the Colored inhabitants of the Cape in an effort to resist the present government's efforts to further curtail their rights.

It is doubtful, however, whether these instruments will by themselves be sufficient to achieve the democratization of South Africa within historical time. Recent experience has shown that a sufficiently ruthless government can drown trade unions and passive resisters in a sea of blood, and there is little doubt that, left to themselves, the Afrikaners would do just that. The one thing restraining them is the existence of a world outside South Africa, which is capable of exerting some pressure. The Dominions of India and Pakistan have already caused the Union serious inconvenience by economic sanctions; it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that when they have settled their differences with each other, they will be in a position to take even stronger measures. Meanwhile, South Africa's policies have served to produce widespread resistance both in London and in the United Nations to her efforts to extend her sway to other territories within and adjacent to her borders. Whatever promises the government may make in regard to the treatment of the natives in these areas can carry little weight with any African native and should carry no more with the outside world. Yet it is possible that the hope of eventually expanding its borders with British and international consent will serve to moderate the racism of the Union of South Africa, at least to the extent that the need of conciliating foreign opinion modified Hitler's racism prior to 1938.

MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM

New York City

When Bookmen Disagree

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Your reviewer, Mr. David Daiches, declares, regarding Solomon Goldman's remarkable *The Book of Books*, that "the extraordinary hodge-podge of quotations referring to the Bible in the 'Echoes and Allusions' section is absolutely baffling. There seems to be no principal of selection here at all, but only a wild and unequal mass of texts." Mr. Daiches is under the impression that Dr. Goldman should have quoted according to some principle, say of literary merit, or of social significance. Herein he misses

the point about as widely as he could. It is perfectly obvious to me that Dr. Goldman undertook the admittedly impossible task of showing the omnipresence of the Bible influence among *all* sorts of people, the illustrious and obscure, the wise and stupid, the serious and trivial and even the drivelling. Mr. Daiches notes that "nowhere are any of Milton's own eloquent statements about the Bible quoted." Then adds: "Is it contempt for the intelligence of the 'average reader' or an unbecoming sense of inner insecurity about the ability of the Bible to stand up on its own feet that makes the author feel that he needs endorsements from 'celebrities' to bolster his case?" Actually *The Book of Books* is written on a level which demands a good deal of intellectual persistence and concentration from any reader, average or above average. The section "Echoes and Allusions" fails—as it was bound to—to reproduce the actual substance of the interpenetration of the mass mind by the influence of the Bible. But that very failure is its success. It needed a lot of courage to achieve this indirect result, and it needs a bit of *sechel* to appreciate it.

MAURICE SAMUEL

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In reply to Mr. Samuel, I can only say that "Echoes and Allusions" contains far more references to the Bible as a *word* than as a book, and a numerical count of the number of times the *word* "Bible" occurs in the written and spoken discourse of "all sorts of people" proves nothing whatever about the "interpenetration of the mass mind by the influence of the Bible." One might as well cite the number of times "Jesus" is used as an expletive as evidence of the influence of Christianity. The idea that the number of times a word is used proves anything at all about the extent to which the idea or thing originally represented by that word has influenced people seems to me to be absurd.

The influence of the Bible can only be proved by citing ideas, attitudes, and expressions which derive from it. If Mr. Samuel thinks that such a view indicates a lack of *sechel*, I can only wonder what sort of *chachamim* he moves among.

DAVID DAICHES

Ithaca, New York

Against Popularizing

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I take Mr. Cushman's letter in the November COMMENTARY criticizing my review of Dr. Cohen's and Dr. Grayzel's books as an explicit, if indirect, confirmation of what I tried to say.

I had only implied that the aim inspiring the two authors was obviously nothing more than the attraction of as many easygoing readers as possible, and not that revelation of the "sublimity" of our Jewish heritage which is promised in Dr. Grayzel's preface. Mr. Cushman frankly offers as the main reason for his praise of the two works the fact that thirty-three thousand copies of *Pathways* and nineteen thousand copies of Grayzel's *History* have already been sold. This argument, it seems to me, helps indeed to clarify the situation.

If the number of copies sold could sufficiently demonstrate the value of a book, what about, say, the world-wide popularity of thousands of silly detective stories and the infinitely more limited reading public for good literature, what about the comics and cross-word puzzles which are certainly far more intensely studied by an overwhelming majority of newspaper readers than even the best reports of the best political analysts? If the number of copies sold or not sold were any sound criterion of the importance of a book, why should one bother at all about writing a review? The "must" items of our reading lists could, then, be ascertained far more objectively by sales figures than by any "subjective" appraisal.

And the use of the work as a textbook? Has Mr. Cushman never heard of bad textbooks?

Mr. Cushman feels certain that "*Pathways* has removed the dust of centuries and enables us to see the panorama of the past in clearer perspective." I think that *Pathways* has marred the stark eternal beauty of our Bible by the use of cheap modern cosmetics. I believe that, not only from the viewpoint of the scholar but even as popular reading, Dr. Cohen's and Dr. Grayzel's books are not good enough; and, as I tried to state, I think there are objective reasons for disliking this kind of popularizing and my wish to make the reading public aware of its perils.

DAVID BAUMGARDT

Washington, D. C.

Oil and Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

We should like to comment on three statements in Ernest Aschner's article "Can Oil and Israel Mix?" in your November issue.

1. Mr. Aschner states: "So far, oil . . . is, because of the negative attitude of the Jewish leaders . . . conspicuous by its absence from the official and private perspectives of Israel."

Oil exploration and exploitation were included in Jewish thinking and planning in the early 20's. The late Israel Rosoff . . . and other Jews engaged in prospecting which, of course, was done with no publicity. . . . Palestine Min-

ing Syndicate, Ltd. . . . prospected for oil and received an oil exploration license in the Southern Dead Sea area. For utilization of the license, the Syndicate, in cooperation with others, founded Jordan Exploration Company, Ltd., which is engaged in oil drilling exploration work.

2. Mr. Aschner writes: "Not only did nobody in authority among Palestine's Jews ever encourage friendly relations with the British executives of the I.P.C., or of the Haifa refinery. . . ." The Palestine Economic Corporation and the Jewish National Fund are the principal owners of the Haifa Bay area where the terminal of the I.P.C. and the oil refineries were erected. The landowners welcomed both establishments, placed land at their disposal, and did everything they could to facilitate the realization of their enterprises. . . . Relations between our representative in Haifa and British executives of the I.P.C. and of the Haifa refineries have been excellent.

3. Mr. Aschner writes: "What is there imperialistic or undignified in establishing auxiliary chemical industries in Palestine. . . ?"

The Palestine Economic Corporation, in conjunction with Palestine Potash, Ltd., the Baron de Rothschild Foundation (PICA), and a South African group of investors, founded a chemical manufacturing enterprise, called Fertilizers & Chemicals, Ltd., with initial capital of over one million dollars. This company's first factory is now being erected next to the refineries. It is one of the objects of the company to cooperate closely with the refineries. The August issue of *Chemical Industries* states: "Refinery operations will provide a tremendous reservoir of raw material for chemical manufacture."

JULIUS SIMON
President

Palestine Economic Corporation
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

My article suggested that top-level relations between the big international oil companies and the Jewish authorities . . . could be considerably improved for the benefit of all concerned. . . . Mr. Simon's comments do not deal with the overall picture which I tried to analyze, but concern statements which, out of context, convey the opposite impression from that given in the article. In reply to the three points raised by Mr. Simon I would like to say:

1. The activities of the Palestine Mining Syndicate and of the Jordan Exploration Company have no bearing on the international aspects of Middle East oil developments as dis-

cussed in my article. The fact that "oil exploration and exploitation were included in Jewish thinking and planning in the early 20's" (*italics mine*) does not disprove the subsequent negative attitude of the Jewish leaders. . . .

2. Mr. Simon surely knows that had the P.E.C. and the J.N.F. refused to put the land at the disposal of the oil companies, the former British High Commissioners were empowered by law to expropriate these lands. That the representative of the P.E.C. in Haifa had "excellent" relations with the British executives of the I.P.C. hardly disproves my contention that nobody in authority among Palestine's Jews encouraged friendly relations with the British I.P.C. executives. . . .

3. The quotation from *Chemical Industries* states a point I did not quarrel with. The establishment of the new chemical plant and the intention to cooperate with the refineries are just what the doctor ordered, and here I would say: More power to Mr. Simon.

ERNEST ASCHNER

Larchmont, N. Y.

Congratulations

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Having had occasion recently to extend for a three-year stretch my charter subscription to COMMENTARY, I wish to follow that practical approval with my congratulations to you and your editorial board upon the continued excellence of the magazine. The inaugurated standards have been scrupulously maintained, and in some respects advanced. As I near the end of my sixty-eighth year, I am old enough to have lived through the great flourishing season of American magazines, and to have enjoyed the supremacy of the Big Four—*Atlantic*, *Harper's*, *Century*, and *Scribner's*. To my mind, the subsequent descent from that Sierra of literary periodicals was deplorable. The establishment of COMMENTARY and its admirable record of achievement have helped to encourage me to hope for a renaissance.

RAY C. B. BROWN

Detroit, Michigan

Note

The volume of interesting, cogent letters received from our readers in recent months has completely overflowed our available space. We regret the delay in publication that this has necessarily meant, and ask our readers' patience. —Ed.

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Mediator Between Past and Future

PRINCE OF THE GHETTO. By MAURICE SAMUEL. New York, Knopf. 294 pp. \$3.00.

Reviewed by LESLIE A. FIEDLER

It is ten years now since I first read Peretz, and before that for perhaps another ten years I had been aware of him dimly as a name, an institution, a folk-hero belonging to the darkness of Europe, the double-darkness of the ghetto from which my grandparents had fled to a sunlit America. It is an irony of communal memory that the bitterest critic of a way of life should be identified in recollection with the world he attacks, and yet it is a constant irony: an enlightened Aeschylus is confused with the bloody world of Agamemnon; a liberal Hawthorne blurs into the rigid Puritan commonwealth of Hester Prynne, an emancipated Peretz fades back into the ghetto from which in pain he escaped. This irony Maurice Samuel chooses to perpetuate in the title of his book, *Prince of the Ghetto*. Prince of the ghetto indeed—that believer in statistics, popular science, socialism, that “free” intellectual in a short coat who would not go home on Seder night: enemy of the ghetto, scourge of the ghetto, destroyer of the ghetto—Prince only in the sense that a revolutionist of '89 was Prince of the Bastille. And yet—

And yet there is possible another Peretz, a quite “real” Peretz, though one the living author would, I suspect, have had to deny: the folk Peretz—not, as Samuel misleadingly asserts, a writer of folk stories, but himself a myth of the folk, recreated by the Jewish people out of what was least conscious, most instinctive in his work. It is characteristic of greatness in writing, or of a certain kind of greatness at least, that it is amenable to precisely such mythic appropriation. There is a type of writer who permits himself to be transmuted, re-invented in response to the shifting needs of his audience; and eternally transformed, he yet in-

tegrally survives. It is Shakespeare, of course, who most spectacularly exemplifies this infinite lack of resistance to adaptation. Peretz, on his level, is almost equally responsive.

There are many possible Peretztes to be extracted from his whole work: the socialist, the enemy of orthodoxy, the exponent of Jewish self-hatred, the Yiddish Hans Christian Andersen, the rhapsodist of Romantic Love; and for some reader each of these must be especially valid, especially useful. It is always a question of *use*—and for Samuel's fictive Prince there is a clear and urgent use: to act as a mediator between the American non-Yiddish-speaking Jew (particularly the intellectual) and what is valuable in his Yiddish past—that is to say, the East European, the ghetto past as opposed to the Hebrew past. It is true, for better or worse, that for such a Jew the ethos of his recent ancestors is most easily available as “literature,” at a level where not belief but the suspension of disbelief is exacted.

To such a Jew, for example, Hasidism, in its native context of intolerance, dirt, and shabby magic is somewhat repugnant; even in Buber's modernist presentation (out of the Baal Shem Tov by Kierkegaard), it remains stubbornly alien. But in the ironic-sentimental tales of Peretz, Yiddish mysticism and ethics come to seem, by virtue of the familiar tone—usable. The American Jewish intellectual fumbling uncertainly backward toward the sacramental values of ghetto life cannot quite reach that vanished world; he cannot achieve the innocence, and will not tolerate the narrowness necessary for the full return. He reaches back, back, and falling short—finds Peretz within touch and comprehension; for Peretz had in revolt moved as great a distance from the Orthodox community as the contemporary intellectual has in nostalgia moved back toward it. The American Jewish intellectual of this generation from his side and Peretz from his, bound between them a rich area of what might be called alienated Jewishness, in which flourish Kafka's K. and Joyce's Bloom, the most compulsive modern images of Citizen and Artist.

In this light, it is not strange, though Peretz could not have foreseen it, that his chance of survival as a writer, his opportunity to enter the mainstream of Western literature depend on his survival in the English language and in America, where alone the Jews in Exile substantially survive, a community capable of producing intellectuals peculiarly prepared to achieve the liaison with Europe which is indispensable to American spiritual life.

PERETZ was never sure of his language or his audience; he experimented with Polish and Hebrew, turned to Yiddish as a *pis aller* and not without regrets. On the one hand, he was tempted outward toward Europe as an audience, and on the other, he felt drawn inward as a teller of tales to his own people; but he could contemplate neither possibility without irony at his own expense. In a piece called "Stories," Peretz satirizes his European orientation in a portrait of the Jewish writer spinning yarns to a stupid, anti-Semitic *shiksa* in hope of charming her into forgetting his ugly Jewish mug and giving him—a kiss (surely, at some level he was ironically recalling *the Kiss*, the Kiss of the Shechina, the ultimate hope of the mystic Jew); and in a sketch not included in this collection, he reports no less bitterly the attitude of an ordinary Polish Jew to his work: "What is the good of it? I don't mean to *you*. God forbid! A Jew must earn a living if he has to suck it out of a wall. But what do *they*, your readers, get out of it?"

In the end, Peretz seems to have spoken to the Europeanized Jew (a prospect rather than a fact), the cosmopolitan, rationalist, socialist Jew made in his own image; in lectures and by tracts, he tried himself to create his own ideal audience, though his total success would have meant the death of his work. After all, Yiddish is the ghetto language, and with the complete Europeanization of the Jew that Peretz dreamed, it would have disappeared as a living tongue, along with the caftan and the *sheitel*. Part of the tragic impact of Peretz' work arises from its being in intent an act of *suicide*, art's immolation of itself for the secularization of Jewish morality, and the Jew's subsumption into a common humanity.

Indeed, Yiddish is just about dead, though it died not in the triumph of universalism that Peretz foresaw, but in mass extermination and the Zionist exodus from Europe. Jewry survives not on the continent Peretz loved and

preached as the Jews' future, but in America and Israel, drawn toward the poles of assimilation and Zionist nationalism, both of which Peretz despised as profanations of Universalism and the Allegorical Return.

WHAT Peretz can mean to those intent on becoming *Hebrews*, in face of the anti-European, anti-Yiddish tenor of life in Israel, I cannot say; but for those of us in America, his meaning is evident, his uses clear. We have become aware that we must achieve, if we are unwilling to become shadows of shadows, a double assimilation, back to a stable past as well as forward toward a speculative future, and in that act Peretz is a potential ally. To make available to us what Peretz carried from the house he helped fire (we must not forget that the death of the Yiddish community, as distinct from the deaths of individual Jews, was not only a murder, but a suicide), he must first be translated, then interpreted, which is to say, somewhat misinterpreted. This pious and necessary misrepresentation, re-creation if you will, is the function of Mr. Samuel's book, and Mr. Samuel, who has done a similar job for Sholom Aleichem, is peculiarly suited for the job, as one who did not inherit but had to learn by an act of choice and will the language of Peretz.

On the whole, he has skillfully disentangled the living Peretz from the 19th-century corpse of the same name: the optimistic believer in material progress, science, and rationalism, the popularizing lecturer, the despiser of ritual. He has perhaps made him, out of nostalgia and a desire to simplify, too single, too gentle and beneficent. For a juster balance we might have been given more of the bitter, the dark Peretz: his commentary on the Jew's comical and soul-destroying pursuit of *parnosseh* (livelihood), his sketches of the degradation of woman in the Jewish community, his studies of the stultifying impact of hopeless poverty and the rule of the spiritually dead in Jewry. There is in Peretz a blackness that denies his avowed optimism, and an ambivalence toward his people that cannot be mitigated without sacrificing him as a writer.

MY ONE major objection, however, is to Mr. Samuel's habit of referring to Peretz's artfully contrived fictions as "folk tales" or "Hasidic tales." Quite aside from the technical objection that the self-conscious writer for publication does not compose "folk" material, such loose

terminology obscures the problem of Peretz's precise relationship to the folkloristic elements which he incorporated into his work. As a European writer, Peretz comes toward the end of a long tradition (which begins with Percy's *Reliques* and Ossian and includes the work of such men as Novalis and Hans Christian Andersen, Goethe and George MacDonald) of appropriating to literature folk material, and of creating a pseudo-folk literature. It is a chapter in the long history of the writer's efforts to domesticate to his task what was once called the *merveilleux*, and is now fashionably called the Absurd.

THE problem of the 19th-century Jewish writer in this regard was markedly different in two main respects from that of the Gentile manipulator of the fairy-tale: first, the Jewish folk-tale had not sunk in social prestige to something told by old women to children; the haggadic tradition had made it possible to keep the *maase* (story) unseparated from the main body of Jewish belief and ritual, and the Hasidic movement had instituted the Tale as one of the centers of religious life; the Jewish folk story was in the life-time of Peretz not an old wife's tale, a degraded myth, but the Myth in full flower—and the writer's problem was first of all to secularize rather than to redeem the Absurd. Second, for Jewish literature, whose development takes place in an incredibly short time, Enlightenment and Romantic period are telescoped, so that the ideological bias of Peretz is not the anti-rationalism of, say, Andersen, but a mixture of rationalism, sentimentalism, and philosophical optimism that reminds the English reader, quite improbably, of Alexander Pope.

The myth becomes literature in Peretz, therefore, by a double process: by the sentimentalizing of the Absurd and the rationalizing of the Absurd. Let us take a single example, the story called "And Even Beyond," in which the "absurd" contention that the Rabbi of Nemirov spends the mornings of the Penitential days in Heaven is challenged by a sceptical Litvak. In the end, the Litvak is content to grant the claim, after discovering that the Rabbi, disguised as a peasant, actually spends the holy mornings chopping wood for the old and the sick. For the Hasid's daring ambiguity of "Heaven," the Litvak and Peretz have substituted the rationalist (What else is Heaven?), sentimental (he splits kindling for a widow

with a child—Ah Yiddishe mamme!) concept, "aiding the poor." What survives in the story, despite Peretz's conscious attempt, is the irreducible absurdity of "Heaven"—but the sentimentality that curses Jewish emotional life cannot be shrugged off. Sometimes, as in the best known of Peretz's stories, "Silent Bontche," a third and saving element enters, the Joke, the Jewish Joke (granted the pick of Heaven's abundance, the holy simpleton asks for "every morning a hot roll with butter, please!"), the secularization of the Absurd as Absurd. But jokes are infrequent in Peretz and he is ordinarily left without the protection of wit against the shallow rationalization, the easy emotional response, so that most often, his reworkings are reductions, unintentional parodies of the original myth.

Only rarely, as in the magnificent story "The Kiss of Moses," does Peretz succeed in maintaining toward the Absurd that wonderful quiz-zical detachment (achieved in such purely secular stories as "In Time of Pestilence" which Samuel does not print), suspended between irony and sympathy, that makes everything for once seem possible—the starving, the ridiculous, the "wrong" Hasid almost (who knows?) worthy of the Kiss.

From Peretz's failures as from his successes we can draw sustenance, and we must be grateful to Maurice Samuel for inviting us to the feast.

Fast and Loose

MY GLORIOUS BROTHERS. By HOWARD FAST. New York; Little, Brown. 280 pp. \$2.75.

Reviewed by MILTON HIMMELFARB

A HISTORICAL novel can have two kinds of merit. Of these, the higher is that it should be an honest work of art in its own right. Failing that, it can be a conscientious popularization of history. *My Glorious Brothers* is neither. It is not without interest, however, as a symptom of certain trends in contemporary taste and politics.

The book is written in the form of the memoirs of Simon the Hasmonean, the last survivor of the five sons of Mattathias who together led the Jews of Palestine in their long and victorious war of independence against the Seleucid Syrian empire, in the second century BCE. It also includes a section that is

supposed to be a report to the Roman Senate by a legate sent out to determine what manner of people the Jews are. Every gesture in the story staggers beneath the weight of heroic or tragic symbolism, the heroism of the heroes is equalled only by the villainy of the villains, and no chapter is without several ringing affirmations of the doctrine that resistance to tyrants is obedience to God. If this confusion of Benjamin Franklin with Judas Maccabaeus were Fast's only anachronism, we should be cheated of the joy of reading that the village teacher in Modin was named Lebel. How does it happen that a man presented as living two centuries before the destruction of the Second Temple, of Aramaic speech and Hebrew education, should be endowed with a characteristically Yiddish name, of German origin, from the East European pale of a few years ago? The explanation is this: many God-bearing Hebrew names end in *el* (Israel, Daniel); but *el* is also a Yiddish diminutive suffix. Fast fell into the trap. What better name for a *melamed* (that timeless phenomenon) than Lebel?

On the surface, the book is a tract to arouse admiration for a great national resistance to a foreign oppressor intent on wiping out the national culture; its real purpose is to make this respectable sentiment a vehicle of propaganda against American policy toward the Soviet Union. This Fast seeks to accomplish by putting in the mouth of his Roman legate, a sinister figure, expressions of hatred against the Jews (read "popular democrats") because they represent a threat to the Roman "free slavery" system (read "American 'free enterprise'") and to "Western civilization" in general.

Of all this, the author is fully conscious. But there is more: the book gives evidence of emotions that Mr. Fast may not recognize in himself.

For one thing, *My Glorious Brothers* is a racist document. Over and over again, the Hellenized Syrians are contemptuously described as a mongrel rabble, vicious precisely because they are a mixed breed. The true Greeks would have been, in their time, good friends or worthy enemies of the Jews, because, like the Jews, they were of pure descent; the Syrian heirs to the Greek culture debased it and wallowed in perversion, because they were a hybrid mixture. Fast's spokesman is particularly violent on this score against the mercenary soldiers of the Seleucid kings. Here his

racist emotions have completely overthrown his formal proletarian ideology, since the military slaves were the most authentically proletarian element in Hellenistic society, doomed to servitude by the political and economic upheavals of their age. Their chief value, after military service, was to reproduce progeny for continued exploitation—and this, after all, is the basic meaning of the word "proletariat."

Finally, the book breathes a love of bloodshed. It is more than the new redskin biting the dust on every other page of the dime-novel Western; it is the ferocity one finds in German and Soviet war films and novels. There are few chapters in *My Glorious Brothers* that do not show the Maccabees wading knee-deep in the blood of five thousand more Seleucid mercenaries. Alexander Nevsky hath slain his thousands, and Howard Fast his ten thousands.

We have, then, these seemingly disparate elements: proletarian and revolutionary sympathies, unconscious racism, love of violence. This has become an all too familiar combination in the past few years. We see it in the preference of radicals formerly contemptuous of Zionism for the Stern group over the moderate Left in Israel; we see it in the remarkable latitude some radicals allow themselves in uncomplicated hatred of Arabs; above all we see it in the crass worship of successful force by men whose former derision for the accomplishments of peaceful construction in Palestine has been turned to admiration only by spectacular military successes.

Fast has written the manifesto of this most recent and curious corruption of the radical ideal.

Writing Immigrant History

AMERICAN HISTORIANS AND EUROPEAN IMMIGRANTS. By EDWARD N. SAVETH. New York, Columbia University Press. 244 pp. \$3.00.

Reviewed by ERIC F. GOLDMAN

THE domestic interests of American intellectuals seem to be focusing again. In the 20's, they gave their greatest attention to a war on Babbitt. In the 30's, economic problems dwarfed all others. Now, they give every indication of making minority problems their Number One concern in home affairs.

Even if the pattern of interest does develop

in this way, Edward Saveth's book will hardly become prime reading. The volume is a Ph.D. dissertation, and it shows many of the characteristics of that lumbering species. But the book is also not likely to be ignored. For Saveth has chosen a theme important for the whole minorities question: the attitudes toward immigrants of professional historians, a group which has a good deal to do with forming general attitudes. And he has brought to his theme astute research, thinking that is at once hard-headed and imaginative, and a conspicuous fairness of approach. People who are interested enough in minorities to write about them are rarely disinterested enough to write with any balance; Saveth is one of the rare persons.

The picture that his book reveals is an appalling one. On the one hand, most of the major American historians of the period between 1875 and 1925 belligerently declared the superiority of "Anglo-Saxon" stock. They were old-stock themselves, Saveth points out, and their conception of the immigrant "reflected, in some degree, their feeling that the newcomer somehow constituted a threat to what they held dear, ideologically and materially. It is this basic insecurity that motivated many of their hostile attitudes." On the other hand, "even more insecure . . . were [the historians] of recent immigrant ancestry. . . . Their particular pattern of insecurity manifested itself in extreme forms of ancestor veneration (filiopietism) and hostility toward other ethnic elements in the population. Because their insecurity was greater, the jingoism of the historians of recent immigrant ancestry far exceeded the chauvinism of historians derived from the older American stock." The Scotch-Irish filiopietists, for example, loosed a caterwauling of boasts and denunciations at the Irish, and the Irish did not spare the shillelagh in reply. The Scotch-Irish, the *Journal of the American Irish Historical Society* announced, were "priest-ridden . . . hard and fast bigots," their histories were "humbug," and their practise was to select "any or all Irishmen who have attained eminence in public life, lump them together and label the lump 'Scotch-Irish.'"

THE most original and striking chapter of Saveth's book concerns the very old-stock Henry Adams. Since the 20's, Adams has been something of an icon among American intellectuals. Conservatives have delighted in his gloomings about progress, liberals in his lashings of capital-

ism, and liberals and conservatives alike have hailed him as an extraordinarily subtle analyst of modern society. But Saveth, by skillfully fitting together a jigsaw puzzle of evidence, presents an entirely different Adams—a man who increasingly based his thinking on the idea that civilization was being ruined by a finance capitalism which came from Jewish activities and a "Jewish spirit." "We are in the hands of the Jews," Adams could write in 1896. "They can do what they please with our values." It is shocking to read such anti-Semitism in an honored figure of the American intellectual world. It is still more shocking—anti-Semitism being so common on all intellectual levels—to reflect that a man who has been taken so seriously could hold so flagrantly inaccurate and so pathetically trivial views of what was going on in the world. Perhaps in discussions of the inadequacies of modern intellectualism, we often become too complicated. Much of the trouble may come from the simple fact that some of the intellectual leaders have been ill-informed and not too bright.

SAVETH closes his book on a hopeful note. Since 1925, he points out, a number of professional historians have made immigration their specialty, and they have treated it from a broad sociological approach that admits of no anti-immigrant prejudice. Filiopietism may not be dead; as a matter of fact, it has found its most widely-read expression in Louis Adamic's recent book, *A Nation of Nations*. Yet Saveth is able to say about *A Nation of Nations*: "There might have been an excuse for such labored jingoism if Adamic had been writing in the 1880's or 1890's, but there is no excuse for it now; for the contemporary American historians treat the immigrant rather fairly."

Rather fairly—but is that the point of greatest social meaning at the present time? This reviewer doubts whether Saveth's conclusion maintains the awareness of the important which distinguishes the rest of his book. Prejudice has certainly diminished in American historical writings, but it is frequently replaced by a way of handling immigrant materials that may be as harmful, if not more harmful to the welfare of the newcomer. Out of good will and a desire to correct previous unfairness, present-day professional historians rarely indulge in criticism of minority groups and this avoidance of attack usually includes abstaining from discussion of a fact which can hardly be mentioned without

attack—the development of minority chauvinisms. Men can be injured by misplaced kindness as well as by hostility; skirting around the facts of minority jingoisms is hardly the way to bring immigrants to a realization that their jingoisms are a menace to a healthy American culture and a wise foreign policy, and therefore an incitement to anti-immigrant thought and action on the part of the rest of the community. In the name both of the whole truth and of the welfare of the immigrant, it is important that the historian should not only be fair by avoiding unjust attacks but also be helpful by venturing into ugly areas of minority activities.

The Iron Tradition

THE WHOLE OF THEIR LIVES. By BENJAMIN GITLOW. New York, Scribner's. 387 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by RAYMOND ROSENTHAL

IN 1934 I attended a meeting of the striking Hotel Workers Union in New York City and heard Benjamin Gitlow, already a "renegade" from the Communist party and the leader of a tiny splinter group on the extreme Left, deliver an agitational speech. Gitlow was a huge man with a large, doughy, serious, deeply scored face; he stood at the center of the platform and spoke without gesture, his back bowed, sunken, as a column of soft stone might have sunk under its own heaviness, his voice very low, adorned with a slight lisp that gave the sole accentual stress not only to his words but to his whole melancholy demeanor. In short, simple sentences, adding one to another as though they were blocks going to construct a doggedly soaring structure, Gitlow told the cooks and pantrymen and waiters and busboys assembled in that hall how they earned their livings. He knew intimately the appalling minutiae of their working lives, the greasy array of indignities and insults that made up their existences. The silence of the audience grew and expanded and tautened, lifting Gitlow's rhetoric to a dramatic vividness which, even at the time, appeared a magical effect to have been achieved by the stringing together of essentially banal sentences. When he stopped speaking the silence continued to pile up, and then the strikers burst out in a scream filled as much with the desperation of their lives as with a tribute to Gitlow's portrayal.

That was a long time ago, long enough for Gitlow (and myself) to have become disenchanted with revolutionary politics, and for Gitlow to have written two bitter and denunciatory books exposing the inner workings and machinations of that Communist party around which so much of his life had centered. That glimpse of Gitlow in the dingy strikers' hall seems far off now. Yet, I believe, the Gitlow who asks for our attention today as the unofficial historian of the Soviet government's long-term project to establish Bolshevism in the United States, is quite similar to the idealistic, heavy-handed, literal, humorless, laboriously detailed propagandist of the strike meeting. Indeed, though Gitlow has lost his radicalism, he still has that simplistic view of the universe which flattens all complexity and sorts out all events and personalities into the immitigable blacks and whites of "dialectical" reasoning. One important factor is lacking now however—the tense and easily inflamed audience. Those who doubt Gitlow will hardly have their smugness dented by his hammer-blows while those of us who know too well the truth of his testimony can only be saddened by his ineptness in its presentation.

His book is a bizarre hodge-podge: verifiable history, personal reminiscences, hearsay tales, radical gossip, the shreds and patches of behind-the-scenes revelations given us by the Budenzes and Valtins, all of it delivered in an unvarying tone of indignation and without those modifying links and touches that compose the roughened texture of reality. Gitlow's reality is still that of the harangue at the eleventh hour, when tempers are stretched tight and the softer tones of humor and logic are drowned out. In short, it is the book of an agitator that he has written, and it bears all the marks of the agitator's hasty improvisation and discursiveness, his spurts of outrage and his long hauls through tedious exposition.

NOWADAYS it is considered bad taste and worse politics to examine a book on your side of the political battleground from any other viewpoint than that of pure and simple politics. In politics, especially leftist politics, it was always thus—one overlooked the aesthetic and moral failings of one's ally for the sake of a solid front against the enemy. But is the front created by such intramural politeness really so solid? I doubt it. For although everything that Gitlow tells us is largely true, the chief feeling

he leaves one with is incredulity. It doesn't *sound* true. And just as Hearst and the *Daily Worker* exist to comfort and convince the already convinced, so Gitlow's latest book seems designed to enforce the fears of the already fearful. Yes, the Communist party is the creature of Russian foreign policy, run solely for Russia's national interest and ready at all times to sacrifice anything from a strike to a declared principle for that reigning interest. And the GPU killings, the deliberate incitement to bloodshed and disorder, the calculated disruption and cynical gangsterism—this is also true and terrifying. And yet, I who know so much more about these events than some average reader for whom this book is intended, still find it difficult to believe Gitlow and follow his story with sympathy.

This crude and blunted perception of his own experience can be traced to the influence of that school of politics in which Gitlow was trained and which, unwittingly and against his avowed wishes, he continues to represent in a strange, inverted way. If one reads his early chapters on the first days of the Communist movement in this country, one gets the impression, not through his design but because of the material itself, of a weird comedy. The whole effort to produce Bolsheviks on order was extravagantly funny even when it involved the most serious of issues. To be a Bolshevik in America meant wearing caps and leather jackets, talking out of the side of one's mouth with Leninist decisiveness, sticking hatpins in policemen's horses, drinking tea out of a glass—the amalgamation of a hybrid bohemianism with a Russian-imported prudery and asceticism to manufacture a code of morals and a way of life which is one of the humorous miracles of the law of combined cultural development. It also meant, and this is the bitter salt of the jest, a fantasy world that had enough relation to the real one to keep one's allegiance, a logic that was brutal and disfiguring to the mind, and a generation of agitators, organizers, and pamphlet writers who were not living men but grotesque mirror-images engaged in an impossible masquerade.

Now this is what Gitlow has utterly missed. And he missed it because, even today, by plumping for Henry Ford and Herbert Hoover at the same time that he regards each and every act of the Communists with the horror that a discriminating man would reserve for their outright crimes, he reveals the tenacity

of his Bolshevik upbringing. The very extremity of his political recoil is symptomatic. But then, of course, one can appreciate his difficulties by remembering what George Eliot once said about the contemporaries of the dinosaur: they had to live seriously with what future men would view as an excellent subject for laughter.

Guilt in Our Times

THE ONLY WAY. By KARL BARTH. New York, Philosophical Library. 122 pp. \$2.00. THE QUESTION OF GERMAN GUILT. By KARL JASPERS. New York, Dial. 123 pp. \$2.00. HITLER IN OUR SELVES. By MAX PICARD. Hinsdale, Illinois, Henry Regnery, 272 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by JAMES LUTHER ADAMS

"MAN has always been ill and always will be," writes the Swiss theologian Karl Barth. This dictum scarcely represents a complete judgment concerning the human condition; nor does it in Barth's opinion imply that all men suffer to the same degree or that there is no help. But it does imply that "the problem of Germany" is not merely a German problem and that the question of the guilt of Germany is not merely a question of German guilt. All three of these books, one by an outstanding Protestant theologian, another by a renowned German philosopher, and the third by a Swiss physician, recognize that the German people are the most seriously ill; yet all three hold that a cure is required for all of us if the Germans are also to be made a little less ill.

Picard, a "Christian humanist," interprets the "Hitler in ourselves" to be the inner and outer chaos, the discontinuity, the disjointedness, in modern culture. Contemporary man is no longer capable of perceiving the things of this world in a context of transcendent meaning of the kind formerly supplied by Christianity. Lacking a sense of continuity with the past or a point of contact with the infinite, men make absolute the momentary, the fragmentary, the sensational, the arbitrary, the sheer act of will. Nazism is the culmination, the "logical expression" of this revolt against all that is not of the moment; "it is thus dynamism solidified." The vulgarization of language, education, art, philosophy, politics, and

sex; the substitution of slogans for rational discussion, the cynical use of force and sentimentality in place of the rule of law; the bewildering jumble of pathos and bathos, of symphony and jive, of prayer and advertising, of world-shaking news and trivial horseplay (all characteristically scrambled together on the radio)—these make man a potential victim of the "external fixations" of political idolatry and dictatorship.

There is much in Picard's book that illuminates the modern "annihilation of man," but much that is important is omitted. For example, little attention is given to the institutional and no attention to the economic problems involved; hence his vivid analysis of the historical situation gives only an illusory sense of depth. And, seduced by the temptations of a fluent, aphoristic style, he often resorts to moralistic hyperbole and oracular generalization. Psychoanalysis, existentialism, anthroposophy, modern art, James Joyce and Dos Passos, and other movements and figures of our time are presented in "disjointed" caricature.

It is not surprising, then, that the remedy he prescribes is simple, vague, and in its way dubious: men should find in Christ their proper continuity with man and God. "In that Christ became man and in that man believes in Christ, discontinuity is abridged." In reality, the "continuity" proposed seems to point in the direction of upper middle-class gentility: the frequent use of the word "hierarchy" produces that impression. One cannot be certain of this, however, for we are told very little about the specific social demands involved. But one can be sure that the author believes the Christian "continuity" should maintain a *Gleichschaltung* among the religions, at least in face of Judaism. "In a world which progressively . . . has turned away from Christ," he says, "it was inevitable that those who first of all had turned away from Christ should again become conspicuous—namely, the Jews. . . . This world-wide desertion from Christ has brought to the fore the Jews, those who first and by an act of violent decision had separated themselves from Christ." The author believes that religious anti-Semitism is "superior" to social or racial anti-Semitism; the former (as represented by Bossuet, for example) "examines the Jews by the essential: man's spirit and man's truth." If Picard is usually vague in his definition of spiritual continuity, he here reveals rather sharply the continuity of his

brand of "Christian humanism" with "the Hitler in ourselves."

DR. KARL JASPERS gave his lectures on German guilt to overflow audiences at Heidelberg University—the university from which he was forced to resign in 1936. His concern is not to depict the crimes and the atrocities of the Nazis; he wished to give no occasion for his audience "perversely to extract a grim kind of flattery from the very enormity of the evil." Nor does he deal with the causes giving rise to Hitlerism or with the psychological aspects of guilt. (His earlier book, *Man in the Modern Age*, described the cultural situation out of which Nazism grew.) In the present lectures he speaks primarily as a moralist.

Basic for his whole discussion is the four-fold distinction between criminal, political, moral, and metaphysical guilt. *Criminal guilt* is for a court to judge, where formal proceedings can be relied upon to find the facts and apply the law. *Political guilt* involves the deeds of statesmen and of the citizenry of a state; everybody is co-responsible for the way he is governed; and unconditioned political surrender to a leader, indeed even the atmosphere of submission, is a sort of collective guilt. *Moral guilt* is the guilt of the individual who is morally responsible for all his deeds, including the execution of political and military orders; jurisdiction here rests with the conscience. *Metaphysical guilt* is rooted in "a solidarity among men as human beings that makes each co-responsible for every wrong and every injustice in the world, especially for crimes committed in his presence or with his knowledge." In the presence of the murder of others (where successful protest is impossible), one may prefer to stay alive. "Thousands in Germany sought, or at least found, death in battling the regime. . . . We survivors did not seek it. . . . We preferred to stay alive, on the feeble, if logical, ground that our death could not have helped anyone. We are guilty of being alive." Those who have managed to remain alive should feel guilty under God in a way that cannot be conceived either legally, morally, or politically.

Jaspers gives much attention to delineating the common forms of self-deception by which guilt is dodged: mutual accusations, conceited defiance or self-abasement, banalities about the universality of guilt or about failure being the human lot or about Germany's being the sac-

rificial substitute for a guilty world needing atonement. It is not enough, he says, to admit guilt. "Every human being is fated to be enmeshed in the power relations he lives by. This is the inevitable guilt of all. . . . It is counteracted by supporting the power that achieves what is right, the rights of man." This counteraction cannot come without individual and social purgation: "the foundation of our new life must come from the Origin of our being." Nor can the counteraction come without an active abandonment of "eremitical seclusion" from political life.

JASPERS' book is impressive, relentless, and offers many a penetrating insight into the general cultural situation. But somehow, in its abstractness and formality, it seems to have grown out of the "eremitical" soil of German academic life.

This is not the case with the theologian Karl Barth. Barth, it will be recalled, electrified the anti-Nazis in Germany by publishing his early protest against the Nazi regime and by resigning his professorship at Bonn, where he is now again teaching (as well as at Basel) during part of the year. While making only passing reference to his own special theological position, Barth deals with the background and the consequences of old Germanism and of Nazism. Letters from critics of his widely read lecture "The Germans and Ourselves" (reprinted here)—in which he set forth the moral and political steps incumbent upon the German people and called upon the Swiss people to show mercy and friendliness—are also presented and then answered with sharp wit and power, from the point of view of what he calls "Christian Realism." He analyzes the possibilities and dangers of the present situation in Germany with a shrewdness of political judgment which will surprise many readers in America who do not know him well. The disjunction between the cultural and the political

life of modern Germany is stressed with singular forcefulness; indeed, at this point Barth, the religious socialist, goes beyond Jaspers in emphasizing the demand for "a new way of thinking and a new conception of life." Something must happen, he says, something that never happened before in Germany: the "much too dialectical German spirit" must "leave the study room"; "it should . . . discover and prove its real depth by becoming openly and honestly politically minded and by assuming responsibilities in the political arena."

It is clear that a new, more politically active Barth is appearing (no less authoritarian with respect to the Bible and the traditional confessions, to be sure). Indeed, some of Barth's earlier disciples are now turning away from him. In the spirit of an ecclesiastical and introspective Lutheranism, and perhaps also in dislike for his religious socialism, these ex-Barthians in Germany believe that the new Barth is "politicalizing the Christian message."

One can discern from the letters of Barth's critics that devious moral judgments, alibis, and sophistries abound today in certain quarters in Germany. Such sophistries appear in appalling measure in the letters by Prof. Erich von Holst, head of the Zoology Department at Heidelberg, recently published (with Barth's pungent replies) in the new British journal, *German Life and Letters*.

"To be cured," says Barth, "means: to become a little less ill." In perusing these letters of his critics, and from reading Barth's replies (as well as from other sources), one finds little basis for hope that Germany as a political reality will soon become even "a little less ill." But responsibility lies upon us as well as upon the Germans. The letters constrain us to ask whether the Allies will now themselves become "a little less ill." Or are we so much bound to our own idolatries that we will give new rein to death and the devil by helping to elicit the reappearance of the old "master-race" Germany?

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

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COMMENTARY

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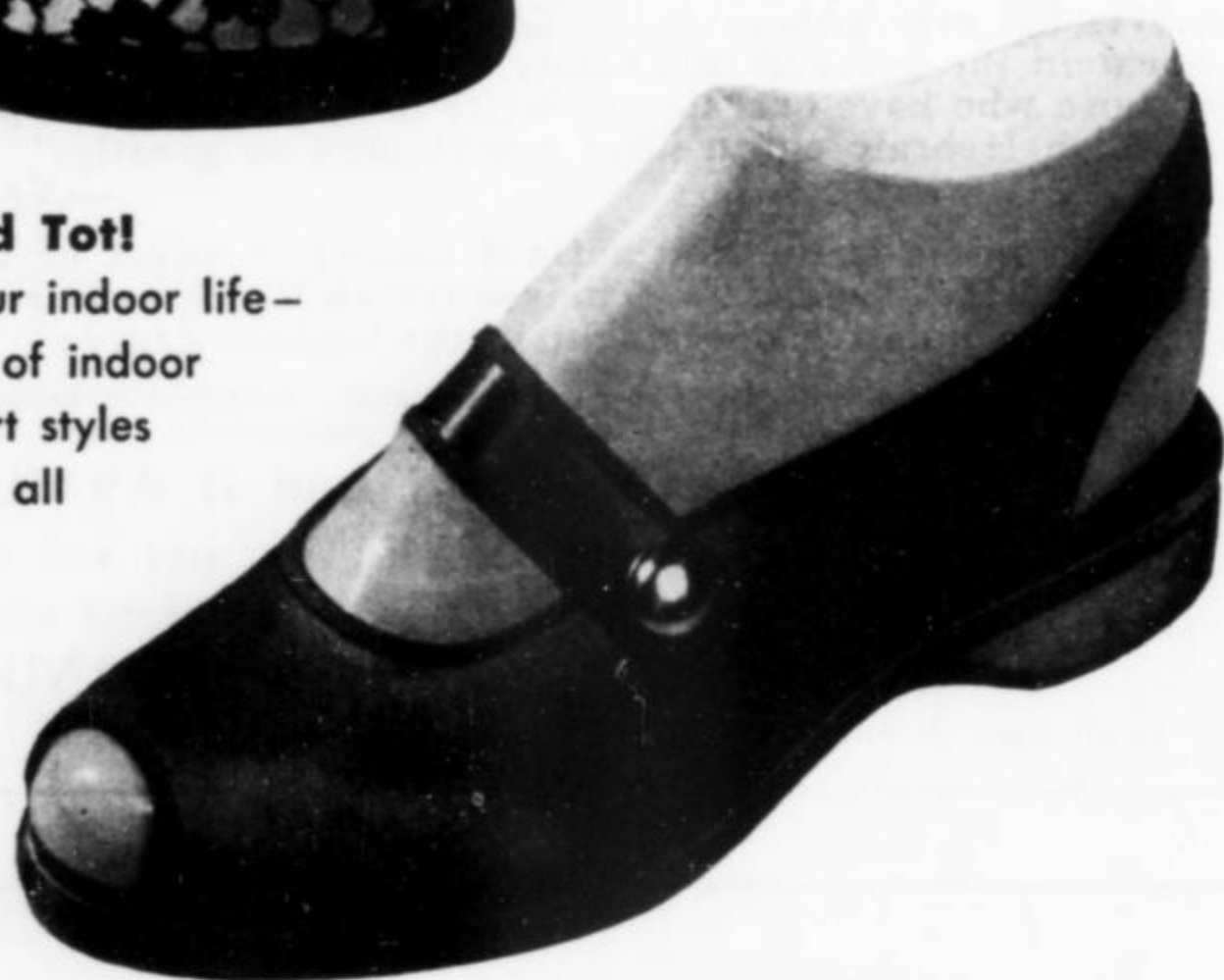
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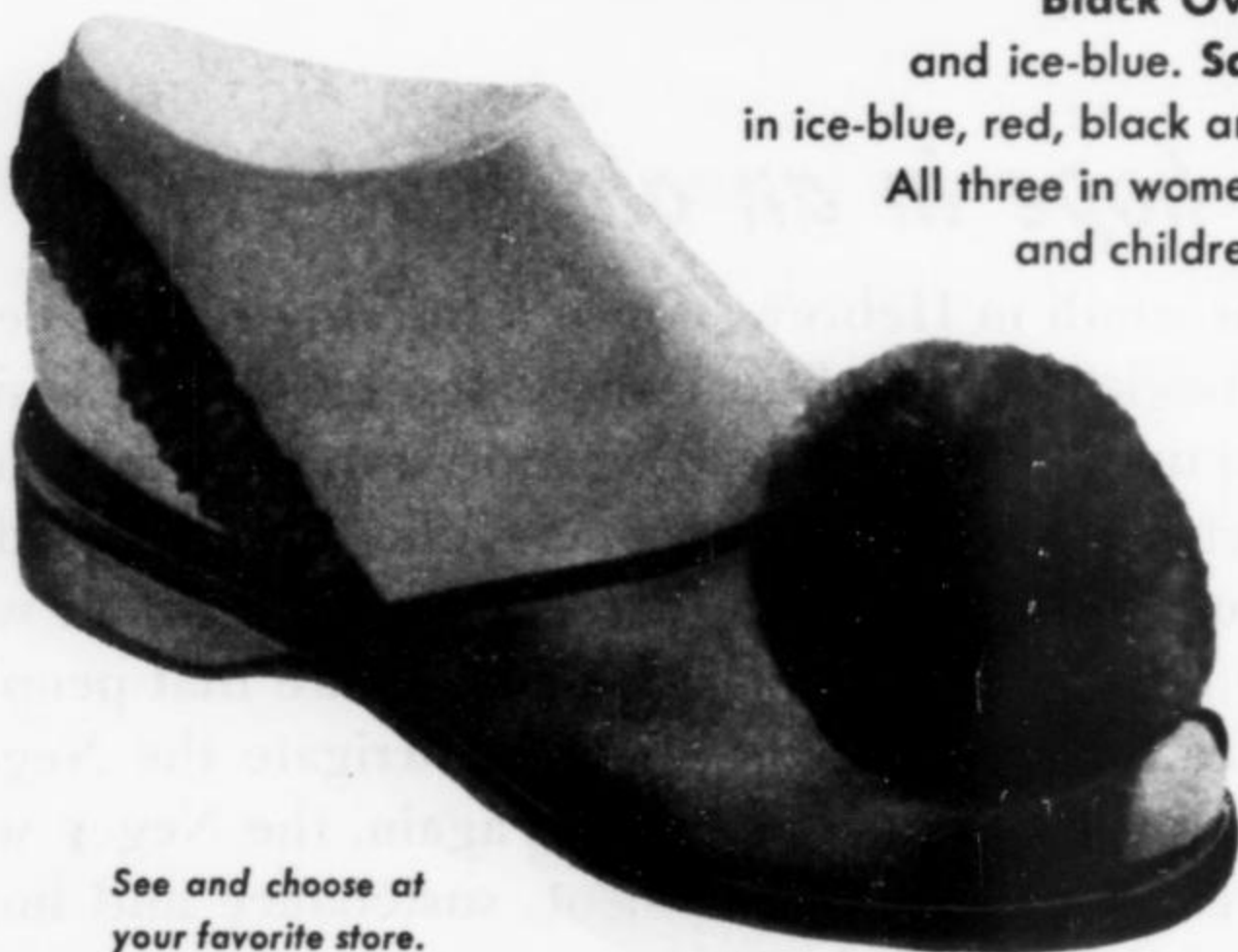
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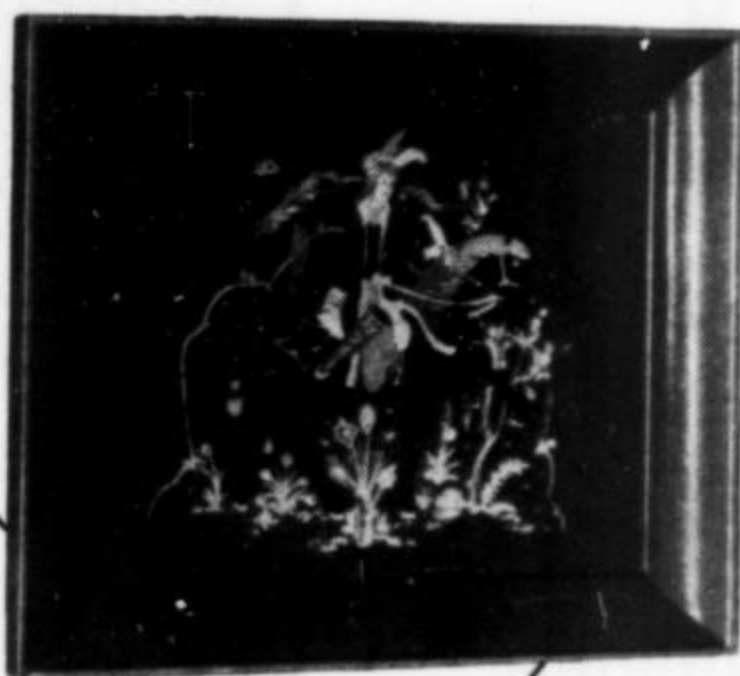
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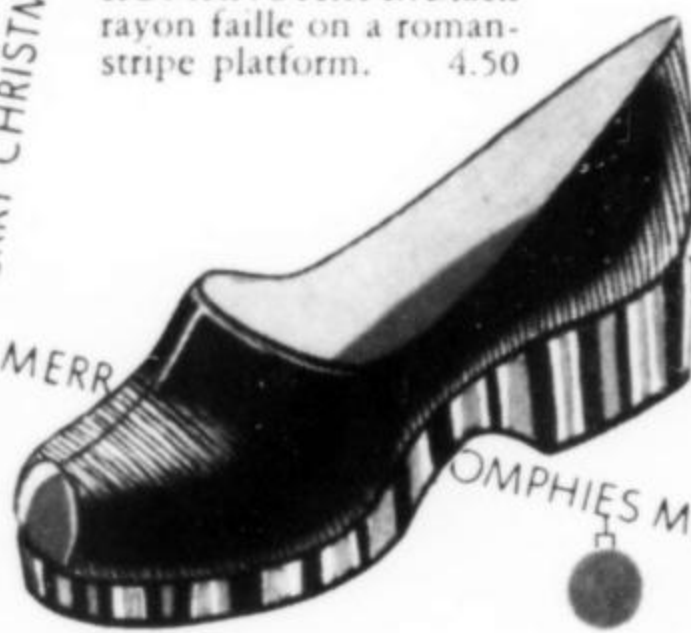


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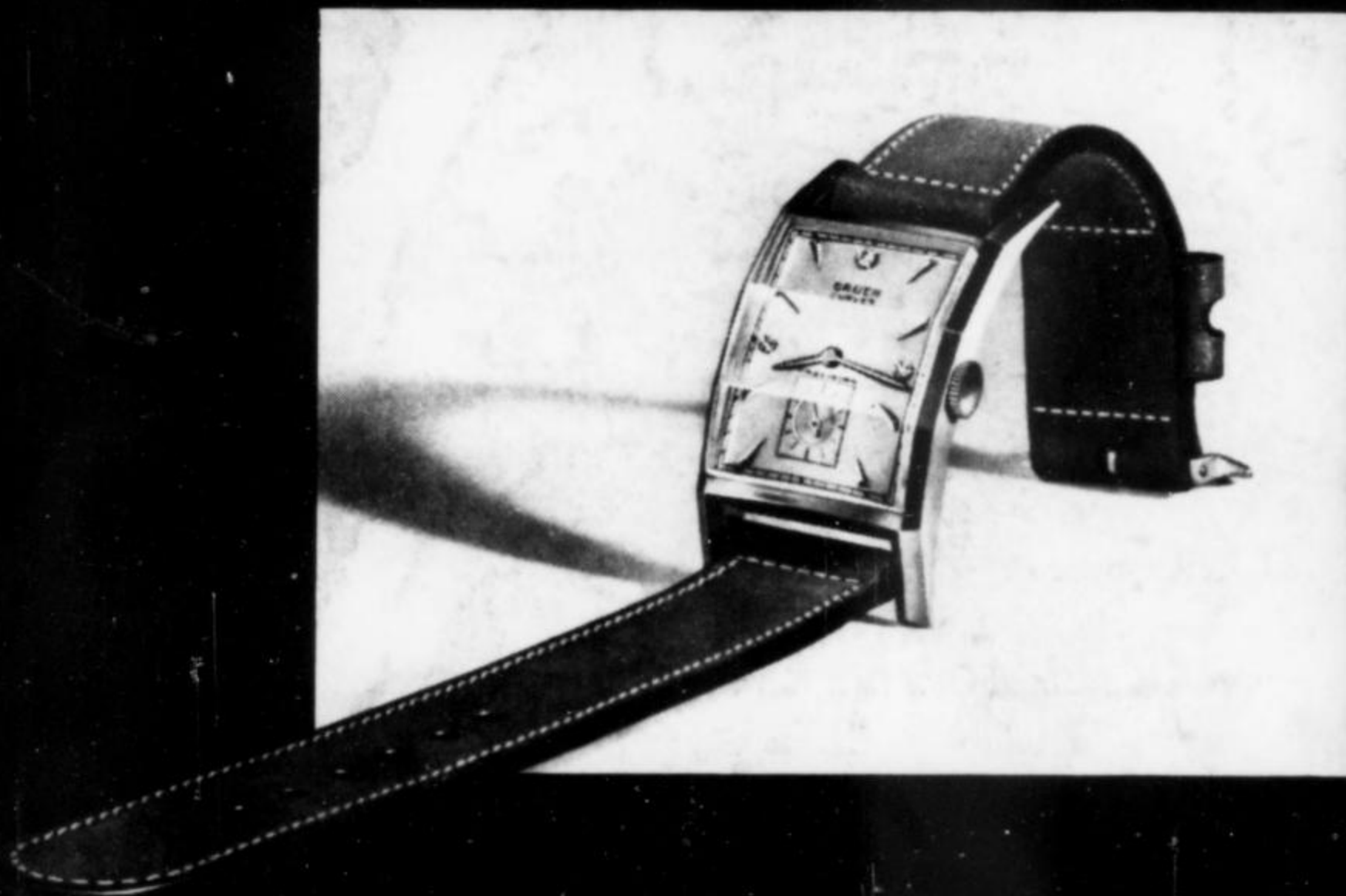
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